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ANNAN WATER

A Romance

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By ROBERT BUCHANAN

AUTHOR OF 'THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD,' 'GOD AND THE MAN,' 'A CHILD OF NATURE,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III

Kx - 6.6.70

London

CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1883

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ANNAN WATER.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

On leaving Marjorie that day and coming into the street, Caussidière walked along rapidly in the direction of the boulevards. He hummed a light air as he went, and held up his head with that self-satisfaction only felt by the man who has money in his pocket. Indeed, the receipt of Miss Hetherington's draft had taken a weight off his mind, as he had an appointment that even-

ing with an individual whose tastes were expensive like his own.

His first care being to turn the piece of paper into coin of the realm at the current rate of exchange, he bent his steps towards one of the numerous exchange bureaux of the city—a dingy shop in a by-street off the Boulevard des Italiens, the window of which was full of notes and money of all nations.

Behind the counter sat a little bearded man in spectacles, presenting the unwashed appearance characteristic of most good 'patriots.' With this worthy Caussidière cordially shook hands.

'Well, my Caussidière, what news?' asked the money-changer.

There was no news, Caussidière explained. The 'good cause' (whatever

that might be) was progressing famously. Meantime the visitor had come to transact a little business, which he at once explained.

The money-changer examined the draft, and nodded his head approvingly.

'Good; it is all right, I think. You can present this yourself and draw the money.'

'I want cash at once,' returned Caussidière. 'If you cannot give me all, let me have a portion.'

'How much?'

'Ten napoleons will serve.'

'You shall have them,' was the reply. 'But where are you going? What is in the wind?'

Caussidière smiled as he took the money.

'To-night I am going to the theatre; after that to a little supper.'

'And in good company, my Caussidière? Ha, ha! I have a guess who will be your companion. But madame, your little wife —what of her?'

'She is where all wives should be—at home,' answered Caussidière, with a shrug of his shoulders. 'Good day, and *au revoir*.'

Leaving the shop, he passed out to the boulevards. His business during the day does not concern us; but when it was evening, and the lights were lit, the cafés thronged, the footpaths full of people coming and going, he reappeared in the centre of the city. Lighting a cigar, he strolled up and down; paused at a kiosk and bought a newspaper; then, approaching

the front of one of the great cafés, found a vacant seat at a table, ordered some coffee, and sat down in the open air watching the busy throng.

He was sitting thus when his attention was attracted to a figure standing close by him. It was that of a young man, dressed carelessly in a tweed suit, and wearing a wideawake hat. He was standing in the light of one of the windows talking to another man, somewhat his senior, whom he had just met. Caussidière caught a portion of their conversation.

'And hoo lang hae ye been in Paris?' asked the elder man.

'All the summer,' replied the other. 'I came here to study and paint, and I have been doing very well. How are all in Annandale?'

'Brawly, brawly. Where are you staying?'

Caussidière did not catch the reply, and the two men moved away with the crowd; but he had recognised at a glance, in the younger of the interlocutors, an old friend—John Sutherland.

'*Diable!*' he muttered. 'What has brought *him* to Paris. I must take care that he and Marjorie do not meet.'

He rose, paid for his refreshment, and walked away. It was now eight o'clock. Hailing a *fiacre*, he jumped in and ordered the coachman to drive to the Théâtre du Chatelet.

The Chatelet stands in one of the great squares, and is one of the largest theatres in Paris. It is an establishment devoted, like the London Alhambra, to spectacular

entertainments, not always of the most refined description.

Alighting at the door, Caussidière strolled into the vestibule and paid for a seat in one of the balcony boxes. He found the vast place thronged from floor to ceiling to witness the performance of a *Féerie*, then in its hundredth night, the *Sept Filles du Diable*, and founded on some fanciful Eastern story. It was a tawdry piece, with innumerable ballets, processions, pageants, varied with certain scenes of horse-play, in which a corpulent low comedian, a great popular favourite, was conspicuous. Caussidière was charmed, concentrating his admiring eyes particularly on one black-eyed, thickly painted lady, who personated a fairy prince and sang 'risky' songs, with topical allusions and dancing accompani-

ments, in a very high shrill voice, to the great rapture of the assembled Parisians. At the end of the third act Caussidière left his seat and strolled round to the back of the theatre.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A LITTLE SUPPER.

PASSING the Cerberus of the stage door, by whom he seemed to be well known, Caussidière soon found himself 'behind the scenes,' and pushed his way through a confused throng of supernumeraries, figurantes, and stage carpenters till he reached the green-room.

Here he found many of the performers lounging about and standing in the centre of the floor. Dressed in a turban and

sultan's robes, and surrounded by a group of ladies in all kinds of scanty costumes, was the obese low comedian—as loud-voiced, low-foreheaded a satyr of a man as could be found in the theatrical profession, even in Paris.

As Caussidière appeared the actor greeted him by name with a loud laugh.

'Welcome, *mon enfant*, welcome,' he cried, shaking hands. 'The Germans are approaching, yet behold—we survive. As I was saying,' he continued, addressing the ladies, 'no sooner did Nichette perceive the monk in her chamber than, wrapping the curtains around her and uttering a scream, she exclaimed——'

Into the rest of his speech, which consisted of a highly seasoned anecdote taken from one of the loose boulevard journals,

we do not purpose to follow him ; it would scarcely bear transcription, but *scabreux* as it was, it was received with shrill laughter and applause by the assembled ladies of the company. The low comedian, in fact, was famous for his funny stories, which were blasphemous when not indelicate, and generally stupid into the bargain.

The ladies now turned to Caussidière, who greeted them by their Christian names —Blanche, Rose, Ada, Adèle, Sarah, and so on. He seemed to know them well, but, as he talked to them, looked round impatiently for some person who was not present.

Presently the object of his search entered, being no other than the fairy prince he had admired so much from the first. Seen closely, she was a young woman of about five-and-twenty, with bold black eyes and a

petulant mouth, significant of ill temper. Directly she saw him she tossed her head and made a grimace.

'So it is *you!*' she cried. 'I thought you were dead and buried.'

'And you did not mourn me?' returned Caussidière softly, with his most winning smile. 'Well, I have come to ask you to sup with me to-night at the Café des Trente Etoiles.'

'I shall not come! I am engaged!'

'Nonsense, Séraphine! You will come!'

'Of course she will come,' cried the low comedian, breaking in. 'My children, live in amity while you can, and drink of the best, for the Germans are approaching. Papa Corbert commands you—be merry, my children, while you may. Séraphine, Caussidière is a king to-night; you will

join him, and drink confusion to the enemies of France!'

'Why did you not come before?' demanded Séraphine sharply. 'It is a week since I have seen you. Were you nursing the baby at home?'

The ladies laughed merrily.

'Ah, Caussidière is a model husband,' exclaimed Mademoiselle Blanche; 'he rocks the cradle and goes to bed at ten.'

'Ladies,' said Corbert, with mock solemnity, 'I conjure you not to jest on such a subject. I am a family man myself, as you are aware. Respect the altar! Venerate the household!—and since the Germans are approaching——'

'Bother the Germans!' interrupted Séraphine. 'Let them come and burn Paris to

the ground. I should not care. I tell you, Caussidière, I have an engagement.'

'Don't believe her,' cried Corbert. 'Séraphine will sup with you. She loves Brunet's oyster-patés too well to deny you. Think of it, my child! A little supper for two, with Chambertin that has just felt the fire, and champagne.'

* * * * *

An hour later Caussidière and Mademoiselle Séraphine were seated in one of the cabinets of the Café des Trente Etoiles amicably discussing their little supper.

The actress was gorgeously apparelled, splendid in silks and feathers, with jewellery everywhere about her, and diamonds sparkling in her hair. Her face was still thickly powdered and made up, her eyes and eyebrows darkened; but despite the question-

able style of her adornment, she looked, to use the French expression, *ravissante.*

So at least Caussidière thought, as he sat and watched her with delighted, amorous eyes; saw her sip her champagne, heard her merry bird-like laughter, as she freely exchanged jokes and repartees with the attendant who came and went.

The supper was charming; Séraphine forgot all her irritation in the enjoyment of the dainties set before her, for she loved the sweet things of life, even down to a paté.

When the meal was done and the waiter had brought in the coffee, the pair sat side by side, and Caussidière's arm stole round the lady's waist.

'Take your arm away,' she cried, laughing. 'What would Madame Caussidière say if she saw you?'

Caussidière's face darkened.

'Never mind her,' he returned.

'Ah, but I do mind! You are a bad man, and should be at home with your wife. Tell me, Caussidière,' she continued, watching him keenly, 'does she know how you pass the time?'

'She neither knows nor heeds,' replied Caussidière. 'She is a child, and stupid, and does not concern herself with what she does not understand.'

Séraphine's manner changed. The smile passed from her face, and the corners of her petulant mouth came down. Frowning, she lighted a cigarette, and leaning back, watched the thin blue wreaths of smoke as they curled up towards the ceiling.

'What are you thinking of?' asked Caussidière tenderly.

'I am thinking——'

'Yes.'

'That you are incorrigible, and not to be trusted; you have given this person your name, and I believe she is your wife after all; and if that is so, what will become of all your promises to me? I am a fool, I believe, to waste my time on such a man.'

'Séraphine!'

'Is she your wife, or is she not?'

'She is *not*, my angel!'

'Then you are free? Answer me truly; no falsehoods, if you please.'

'I will tell you the simple truth,' replied Caussidière, sinking his voice and nervously glancing towards the door. 'In one sense, look you, I am married; in another, I am not married at all.'

'What nonsense you talk! Do you think I am insane?'

'I think you are an angel.'

'Pshaw! Take your arm away.'

'Listen to me, Séraphine. The affair is very simple, as I will show you.'

'*Bien!* Go on!'

'In a moment of impulse, for reasons which I need not explain, I married her of whom you speak, according to the English law. It was a foolish match, I grant you; and I have often repented it from the moment when I met *you.*'

'*Après?*' murmured Séraphine, with a contemptuous shrug of her little shoulders.

'*Après?* Well, the affair is clear enough. I am a French citizen, my Séraphine!'

He looked at her smiling, with an ex-

pression of wicked meaning. She returned the look, laughing petulantly.

'What of that?' she asked.

'Do you not perceive? So long as I remain in my mother country, where no ceremony has taken place, this person is not my wife at all. The law is very convenient, is it not? A marriage in England with an English subject is no marriage unless it has been properly ratified in France.'

Séraphine uttered an exclamation. She knew her companion to be unscrupulous, and she herself was not over-squeamish in the ordinary relations of life; but Caussidière's words revealed an amount of diabolic calculation for which even her easy morality was not prepared.

'Oh, but you are *traitreux*,' she cried. 'It is abominable. Why do you not do

what is right, and acknowledge her according to the French law?'

'For a very good reason. There is some one I love better, as you know.'

But the actress drew herself angrily away.

'You love no one. You have no love in your heart. I tell you, Léon, I am sorry for her and for her child. There *is* a child too, is there not?'

'Yes,' replied Caussidière.

'Does she know, this poor betrayed, what you have just told me?'

'Certainly not. It would only—distress her!'

'It is infamous!' exclaimed Séraphine.

'Not at all,' he answered. 'She is very happy in her ignorance, I assure you. When the time comes, and it may come

when you please, I will tell her the truth, and she will quietly go home.'

There was a long pause. Séraphine continued to smoke her cigarette and to glance from time to time with no very admiring eagerness at her companion. It was clear that the frank confession of his villainy had not raised him in her esteem. Seeing her coldness, and anxious to change the subject, he rang for the waiter and ordered the bill. While that document was being prepared he opened his purse and looked into it. The act seemed to remind him of something he had forgotten. He felt in the pocket of his coat, and drew forth a small cardboard box.

'I have something to show you,' he said smiling.

Séraphine glanced up carelessly.

'What is it, pray?'

'It is this,' replied Caussidière, opening the box and showing a gold bracelet richly wrought. 'Do you think it pretty? Stay! Let me try it on your arm!'

So saying, he clasped the bracelet on Séraphine's left wrist. Holding out her arm, she looked at it with assumed carelessness but secret pleasure, for she was a true daughter of the theatre, and loved ornament of any kind.

'I see!' she said slyly. 'A little present for madame!'

'*Diable!* No, it is for you—if you will accept it.'

'No, thank you. Please take it away. I will not take what belongs to another.'

'Then I will throw it into the street!'

At this moment the waiter returned with

the bill. It amounted to a considerable sum, and when Caussidière had settled it, and liberally fee'd the bringer, there was very little left in the purse.

'You will wear the bracelet for my sake,' said Caussidière softly as he assisted the actress to put on her cloak.

'No, no,' answered Séraphine, but without attempting to take the bracelet off. 'Apropos, Léon, where do you get your money? You do not work much, I think, and yet you spend your cash sometimes like an English milor.'

'I wish I were twenty times as rich, for your sake!' cried Caussidière, evading the question. 'Ah, my Séraphine, I adore you!'

He drew her towards him and kissed her on the lips. The present of the bracelet had prevailed, and she suffered the salute

patiently; but there was an expression in her face which showed that she rated her admirer exactly at his true worth.

A few minutes later Caussidière, with the actress hanging on his arm, gaily quitted the café.

* * * * *

Dawn was already beginning to break dimly over the roofs of Paris when Caussidière returned home. He opened the street-door with a key, ascended the stair, and reached the sitting-room, where he found a hand-lamp dimly burning.

The light of the lamp, flashing upon his handsome face, showed it flushed and wild, the eyelids red, the eyes feverish and troubled. After quickly drawing off his boots, he took the lamp and passed quietly into the inner chamber.

There, in a quaintly curtained bed, lay Marjorie Annan fast asleep, her blue eyes closed, her golden hair scattered on the pillow, her arm, in its snowy gown, outstretched upon the coverlet. Beside the bed, in a species of wooden cot, was little Léon, also sleeping tranquilly.

But Marjorie's sleep was troubled. Her lips moved, and she stirred restlessly, murmuring often to herself. Caussidière stood and looked at her, holding the lamp in his hand, and the rays played softly over the sleeper's sweet seraphic face.

Suddenly she started and opened her eyes.

'Oh, it is *you*,' she cried, with a faint smile. 'You are late, Léon.'

Caussidière nodded, but did not reply. Setting down the lamp, he proceeded to

divest himself of his neckcloth before the mirror.

'I was dreaming when you disturbed me,' continued Marjorie gently. 'It was not a pleasant dream, and I am glad you woke me from it. I thought I was far away, by Annan Water.'

'Indeed!' muttered Caussidière, with some indifference. 'There, you had better go to sleep again.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

AN ARTIST'S MODEL.

On the morning after her strange interview with Marjorie, Adèle of the *Mouche d'Or*, dressed in the wildly extravagant costume of a pétroleuse, and holding a flaming torch in her hand, was standing in an artist's studio—a grimy enough apartment, situated in a back street in the neighbourhood of the Madeleine.

She was posing for the benefit of the artist immediately in front of her, but her eyes were fixed not upon him, but upon the

figure of a young man who was working hard at the other end of the room. Ever since she first came to the studio, just three days before, Adèle had watched this young man very curiously.

His behaviour interested her. He seldom spoke, but worked at his picture with quiet pertinacity. Presently the young fellow dropped his brush and walked silently from the room. Adèle turned her eyes upon his companion.

'Who is your friend, monsieur?' she asked abruptly.

The artist, deeply engaged in his work, failed at first to notice her question.

'Who is he?' she asked again.

'He?'

'Yes; the young man who works always and never speaks.'

'He is a friend.'

'Naturally, monsieur, since he shares your studio. But where does he come from?'

The artist smiled.

'You seem curious about him, mademoiselle,' he said. 'What do you wish to know concerning him?'

The girl shrugged her shoulders.

'Wish to know!' she exclaimed. '*Ma foi!* I have no *wish* to know, monsieur.'

'Then I don't mind telling you. He is a countryman of mine. He was born in a village near where I was born. I knew him when he was a boy; and when he came to Paris a few months ago, determined to work hard and compelled to live on slender means, I offered to share my studio with him, and he is here. There, you have lost

your fierce look, and got quite a tame one into your eyes. You are no longer a wild creature of the Revolution. You are also stiff, I perceive. Take a few turns about the rooms, mademoiselle, then we will go on.'

The artist walked over to a table littered with all kinds of *débris*, filled a well-coloured briar-root pipe, and began to smoke.

He was a tall man, slight in build, rather good looking, but very carelessly dressed; when he walked, he did so with a slight limp, though he appeared to have all his limbs; and when he spoke French, he did so with a very strong insular accentuation. From himself Adèle had learned nothing of his personal history, for he was chary of giving that kind of information, and at

times more inclined to work than talk. Their acquaintance was of the most business-like nature. He had seen her one evening in a *café chantant;* had marked her as an excellent model for a figure he was about to paint in the foreground of a picture he was then busily preparing—the figure of a woman of the Faubourg St. Antoine, who was about to fire the Bastille. He had made her an offer, and Adèle, having her mornings free, and being by no means unwilling to add to her somewhat slender income, had accepted the offer, and had agreed to place three mornings of every week at the artist's command.

It was dull work, Adèle found, standing on a rostrum for an hour at a time in one set attitude; and she had tried to relieve the monotony of the situation by chattering to

the artist; but finding that her advances met with scant encouragement, she soon relapsed into taciturnity, and became more interested in the young artist who shared the studio, and who worked at the other end of the room.

Having received permission to rest, Adèle shook herself like a young pantheress, and leapt lightly from the rostrum, while her employer, having lit his pipe, strolled off and left her in sole possession of the studio. She stood for a moment to stretch her limbs, already cramped with posing; then she gave a careless glance about her.

It was a dreary-looking room, with a great skylight, and a window commanding an outlook over the roofs of Paris. Artistic lumber was scattered everywhere—easels, palettes, paint-tubes, pieces of loose canvas,

not to speak of a table on which stood an empty coffee-pot and some cups, some paint brushes, and a black bottle.

Adèle strolled thoughtfully to the further end of the studio, where the younger of the two men had been working. There stood the picture at which he worked so assiduously, covered with a green fold of baize. Adèle longed to have a peep at it. She listened; returned to the door; there was no sound; then she ran lightly across the room, lifted the loose baize, and exposed the picture to full view.

'Holy Mother!' she exclaimed, starting back with raised eyebrows and hands.

'You are startled, mademoiselle,' said a voice. 'Do you consider the picture a bad one?'

Adèle turned and saw her employer

gazing at her from the threshold of the room.

'If you please,' he continued, advancing, 'we will return to our work. Your face has got some expression now: the rest has done you good.'

Without a word she turned from the picture, mounted her rostrum, and fell into her accustomed pose.

For a time the artist worked again silently, and Adèle, glancing from him to the picture, seemed deliberating as to what she should do.

Presently she spoke.

'How long has *he* been in Paris?' she said, indicating by a sidelong movement of her head the person who usually occupied the other end of the room.

'Several months, as I informed you,'

returned the artist, without looking up from his work.

'Who is his model?'

'Which one?'

'For *that* picture.'

'No one. He paints from memory.'

'Ah, then, he has known her? he is a compatriot of madame?'

'Of whom?'

'Of the original of that picture—Madame Caussidière.'

'Ah, you think you trace a likeness to a friend?'

'I do not think it, monsieur; I know it. It is madame, not as she is now—ah, no—but as she must have been years ago, before she married that *chouan* of a Caussidière!'

'You are complimentary to your friend's husband.'

'*My friend?*' exclaimed the girl; 'ah, no, monsieur, she is not that—she is too good for that—and if she used to be *his* friend, tell him he ought to help her. She wants some one's help.'

'Probably,' returned the Scotchman; 'but it's a dangerous thing, my girl, to interfere between husband and wife, and my friend will do well to keep out of it. There, that will do for this morning, Adèle,' he added, as she leapt from the rostrum; 'take my advice, and say nothing of this incident to madame your friend. It may unsettle her, and make the end of her married life rather more unbearable than the beginning of it.'

He lit up his pipe again and strolled carelessly about the studio until Adèle had left. Then his manner suddenly changed;

he left the studio, rushed up a flight of stairs, and entered the little snuggery above, where his companion was sitting, and clapped him on the shoulder.

'Sutherland, my boy,' he exclaimed, 'good news.'

Sutherland, awakened suddenly from a day dream, started from his chair.

'About Marjorie?' he cried.

'Yes,' returned his friend with a smile, 'about Marjorie. I have been talking this morning with a woman who is one of her intimate friends.'

'Where is she?' exclaimed Sutherland. 'Let me see her?'

'Now, look here, my good fellow,' returned the other, 'you must sit down and cease to excite yourself. Moreover, you must work cautiously, or my prize

may turn out a blank. Yes, I have discovered in the model Adèle one who may tell you first what you want to know—who is often in the house with Marjorie, who knows exactly how happy or how wretched she may be, and who, if properly handled, may be made to tell you all. But you must be careful, as I have said, for she is a rough creature, and might turn stubborn. She is gone now, but she will return to-morrow, and you shall talk to her. Think it over, and decide for yourself the best way to act.'

He descended to the studio, while Sutherland sank again into his chair to think of Marjorie. Think of Marjorie! Did ever an hour pass when he did not think of her? Her presence in the city seemed to sweeten the very air he breathed. Wherever he

looked he seemed to see her, and whenever he painted a picture it was her face which grew beneath his brush.

He had come to Paris still cherishing the one hope which had been his ever since that day when she had left them all for the man whom she had made the master of her life—the hope of watching and guarding her from sorrow. It was a wild, extravagant dream, and he soon saw its hopelessness. How could he guard her now?

He had watched her day by day; had seen with bitter pain her pretty face grow pale and sad; but he had shrunk from revealing himself, because he had feared to make her hard lot even harder for her to bear. Besides, although she looked pale and sad, he had no absolute proof of her husband's cruelty. But now

he saw new hope; he should be able to gain absolute knowledge if, as his friend said, he worked well.

He thrust his hand into his coat pocket and drew forth a letter.

It was one from Miss Hetherington which he had received only the day before. He turned to a certain paragraph and read:

'Be sure to look to Marjorie. She does not complain, but I am certain from her letters she is unhappy. My poor bairn! If you cannot gain information, you must go to her in spite of that man. She must not be left there to break her heart.'

No, she should not; he was determined she should not. He would speak to Adèle on the following day, and act upon the information which she gave.

He spent a singularly restless night; the next morning he looked pale and harassed. But after breakfast when he entered the studio he was quite calm. He was working with his customary ardour when the studio door opened and Adèle came in.

The moment she appeared he sprang up and accosted her.

'I am glad you have come,' he said in doubtful French. 'I—I wish to speak to you about a lady whom you know well. Yes; Nairn, my friend, has told me that you know her.'

Adèle fixed her wild eyes upon the young man, and then, with a curious smile, pointed to a portrait.

'You mean her?' she asked.

'Yes, yes! Tell me all you know concerning her. I am interested in her—

deeply interested. My friend tells me that you sometimes visit the house, though how or why I cannot guess. What takes you there ?'

'I carry a message sometimes from the cabaret,' answered Adèle.

'And you see her ?—you speak to her ?'

'Why not ?' said the girl somewhat defiantly, for she read in the young man's face no little astonishment that Marjorie should see such company. 'Yes, I see her —and the child. She is like that picture, but changed, older. But there, perhaps you sometimes see her for yourself.'

'Only from a distance,' answered Sutherland. 'I have not spoken to her; she does not know that I am in Paris. But I have seen enough,' he added sadly, 'to

suspect that she is unhappy and neglected. Is that so ?'

Adèle looked at him for some moments in silence, then she said, with the low harsh laugh habitual to her :

'You know little or nothing, monsieur. If you will swear not to betray me, I can tell you much more—of her—and of her husband. *Diable*, I should love to do him an ill turn, and her a good one. Will you swear ?'

'Yes,' answered Sutherland, startled by the girl's strange manner. 'For God's sake tell me all you know !'

Upon being further questioned, it seemed that Adèle knew really very little concerning Marjorie herself. She could only tell Sutherland what he had already, by quiet observation, discovered for himself,

that Marjorie seemed unhappy; that there was no sympathy between herself and her husband; that, indeed, she seemed to fear him.

About Caussidière himself Adèle was much more explicit—indeed, she seemed to be pretty well acquainted with his secret life, and spoke of it without reserve. Suddenly she asked:

'Do you know Mademoiselle Séraphine, of the Chatelet?'

'No.'

'Well, Caussidière does.'

'What of that?'

'Well,' repeated Adèle, 'how dull you are, monsieur. You asked me just now why Caussidière neglects his wife, and I tell you.'

'He has an intrigue with an actress?'

'Not exactly. He simply prefers her company. When Madame Mère sends a little cheque, Caussidière changes it, gives Séraphine a little supper, and leaves his wife to mind the baby at home. *Voilà tout.*'

She turned as if about to leave him, but Sutherland called her back.

'Mademoiselle Adèle, I—I am not a rich man, but Madame Caussidière has friends who will not see her want. You have access to her, I have not; you can give her some money——'

Adèle laughed aloud.

'That is so like a man,' she said. 'Give her money! I give her money, who can earn but a few sous by singing at a *café*? She would think I stole it. Besides, she does not want money, monsieur.'

Again she turned to go away, and again he detained her.

'Adèle, you see madame very often, do you not?'

'I go when I can. I like the boy.'

'Women can often say a word of comfort to each other. You won't say that you ever met me, but if you can make her happier by a word sometimes——'

He paused in some confusion, and held forth a napoleon. Adèle laughed again, and roughly tossed his hand aside.

'Bah! kindness is not to be bought from Adèle of the *Mouche d'Or*. I shall see her often, for, as I said, I like the child.'

She walked away from him this time, lifted the green baize which covered the picture, and looked again at the face.

'Ah! monsieur!' she said; 'she does not

look like that now; that is a happy maiden, peaceful as the Madonna, not Madame Caussidière.'

She dropped the baize again, walked away to attend to her master, who had just entered the room, and Sutherland was left to ponder over what she had said.

His reflections were by no means pleasant. He saw, or thought he saw, the whole motive of Caussidière's conduct from beginning to end. His had been no wild infatuation for Marjorie—he had married her knowing she was Miss Hetherington's child; in the hope of inheriting, through his wife, Miss Hetherington's wealth. So far his purpose had been gained. Miss Hetherington, overcome by fear of her son-in-law and pity for her daughter, had given largely from her own means, little knowing that

these supplies were squandered upon Marjorie's successful rival.

During the few days which followed, Sutherland was like a man entranced—utterly bewildered as to what he should do.

Once or twice he saw Marjorie walking with her little boy in the streets of Paris, and he fancied that her face looked more careworn than ever. He dared not speak to her. It would be better, he thought, to make his presence known to Caussidière, and to give that gentleman plainly to understand that unless Marjorie's life were made more bearable to her, the cheques from Miss Hetherington would inevitably cease. That would be the only way to touch Caussidière's heart—it was the surest way to proceed, and Sutherland determined to act upon it.

One morning—some two days after his interview with Adèle—he left his rooms with the determination to find Caussidière. So engrossed was he with this new idea, that for the time being he forgot all else. He walked through the streets, along the boulevards. He was wondering how and where he should carry out his design, when he was suddenly startled by the sound of his own name.

He started, turned quickly, and found himself face to face with Marjorie!

For a moment he could say nothing. A mist was before his eyes, and his rising tears choked him; but he held forth his hands to grasp her trembling fingers.

'Johnnie,' she said, 'it is really you! Oh, I am so glad, so glad!'

He brushed away the mist which was

blinding his eyes, and looked at her again. Her cheeks were suffused, her eyes sparkled, and a sad smile played about the corners of her mouth. She looked at that moment something like the Marjorie whom he had known years before.

The change lasted only for a moment, then her face became paler and sadder than it had been before, and her voice trembled as she said :

'Johnnie, you must tell me now how they all are at Dumfries.'

She sat down on one of the benches which were placed by the roadside, and Sutherland took his seat beside her.

'I was sitting here,' she said, 'when I saw you pass. At first I could not believe it was you, it seemed so strange that you

should be in Paris, that I should meet a friend from Scotland.'

The tears came into her eyes again, and her voice trembled. Turning her face away, she beheld a pair of eyes gazing wonderingly up at her.

'Léon, *mon petit*,' she said, placing her hand upon her child's golden curls; then turning to Sutherland she said, 'This is my little boy.'

As little Léon was not conversant with English, Sutherland addressed him in the best French at his command. He took the child on his knee, and the three sat together to talk over old times.

'It seems so strange I can hardly believe it is real,' said Marjorie. 'Tell me how long have you been in Paris, and how long will you stay?'

'How long I shall stay I don't know,' said Sutherland. 'I have been here several months.'

'Several months?' repeated Marjorie, 'and I see you to-day for the first time.'

'I thought it would be better for us both, Marjorie, that I should keep away.'

Perhaps she understood his meaning, for she turned the conversation to other things. He told her of the changes which had taken place in Annandale; that the old servant Mysie lay with the minister sleeping in the kirkyard; that a large family filled the manse; and that Miss Hetherington was the only being who, amidst all this changing, remained unchanged. A grey, weary, worn-out woman, she dwelt alone in Annandale Castle.

'Marjorie,' he said after a long silence,

during which she hung her head, weeping silently, 'the old life seems far away now, and all the world is different; yet it seems only yesterday that we were lass and lad. Do you mind when I first came to the manse, a wee bit lad, with a message from my father, and saw you playing on the hearth, bonnie as a fairy child?'

'Yes, Johnnie. And we grew friends at once.'

'Friends till death, Marjorie,' returned the young man solemnly. 'Will you be angry with me if I speak to you of something else?—of a promise you made to me not so long ago?'

'What promise?' asked Marjorie, a little startled; and as she spoke she drew her boy towards her, as if to remind Sutherland that she was a wife and mother.

'It was this, Marjorie,' he continued gently; 'to let me know, to ask my help and sympathy, if ever trouble came to you.'

She trembled and grew very pale.

'You remember?' he said.

'Yes, I remember,' she replied, passing her trembling hand over the golden hair of the child.

Sutherland gazed at her with the sadness of infinite affection.

'And have you kept your promise?' he demanded, in a low voice. 'Has the trouble never come? Have you never been in need of my help, Marjorie?'

She turned her clear, truthful eyes full on his.

'Never,' she answered; then in more faltering accents she continued, forcing a

faint smile, 'We have all our vexations; no one's life is all sunshine, Johnnie; but I have my child and—and my husband.'

'Is he kind to you? Are you happy, Marjorie?' demanded Sutherland eagerly, almost vehemently.

'What passes between husband and wife,' she answered, 'is not to be discussed even between old friends. Yes, he is very kind. Why should you ask me such a question?'

He saw that to push his questions further would only cause her pain; yet having gone so far, and being eager to seize the opportunity, he was determined not to cease altogether.

'Marjorie,' he said, 'may I speak of your mother?'

'Ah, yes!' she cried, her eyes again filling with tears. 'My dear mother!'

'She writes to me very often; indeed, it was at her wish that I first came to Paris. *She* is afraid—she has been long afraid—that you are not as happy as you deserve to be.'

'Why should she think that? I—I have never complained.'

'No; but she reads between the lines of your letters, and fancies—— Oh, Marjorie,' he continued more passionately, 'do not hide your heart, for her sake as well as for mine. Tell me the whole truth! Tell it as a sister would tell it to a brother; for are you not my sister? Did you not promise to be my sister till the end?'

She rose trembling and shrinking as she replied.

'I have nothing to conceal,' she said. 'My mother and you are both wrong.

Pray do not pain me any more by such questions. Good-bye, Johnnie! I must go home now.'

So saying, she held out her hand; he took it, and gave it a gentle pressure.

'Let me walk with you towards your home,' he said.

'If you will promise not to talk as you have done. Talk only of Annandale, Johnnie, and the dear old times.'

'I promise! I promise!'

Holding little Léon by the hand, they strolled quietly along under the trees. Presently they came to one of the many merry-go-rounds which are to be found in the Champs d'Elysée. Merry children were riding on the wooden horses, and mothers and nursery-maids were looking on.

Here little Léon clamoured for a ride, and Sutherland placed him on one of the horses. As he rode round and round, uttering cries of infantine delight, Marjorie looked on with heightened colour, her eyes full of a mother's tender rapture; and, gazing upon her, Sutherland thought to himself:

'Poor Marjorie! She loves her husband for her child's sake. I have no right to come between them.'

When the ride was done and the three passed on together, Marjorie seemed to have forgotten all her trouble and to look her old smiling self, but Sutherland's heart sank in deep dejection.

Close to the Madéleine they parted, with a warm handshake and a promise to meet again.

From that day forth Marjorie and Sutherland met frequently, and walked together in the Bois de Boulogne or on the boulevards, with little Léon for a companion. At her express entreaty he refrained from speaking to Caussidière, though he saw that, despite her attempts at cheerfulness, her face sometimes wore an expression of increasing pain. He began to suspect that there was something very wrong indeed; and he determined to discover, if possible, the exact relations existing between Marjorie and her husband. Meantime, the meetings with his old sweetheart were full of an abundant happiness, tempered with sympathetic distress.

It was something at least to walk and talk with her, to look in her face, to feel the pressure of her hand. His feeling

towards her soon became holy and faithful beyond measure. His strong affection, purged in the fire of cruel disappointment, assumed the nature of a sacred sentiment, purifying and strengthening his nature, and sweetening his disposition towards all the world.

CHAPTER XXX.

A CRISIS.

SUTHERLAND'S suspicions were correct. Matters between husband and wife were rapidly coming to a climax. Day after day, and sometimes night after night, Caussidière was from home, and when he was there his manner towards his wife and child was almost brutal.

Marjorie bore her lot with exemplary docility and characteristic gentleness; but one day her patience gave way. She re-

ceived a communication—an anonymous letter—which ran as follows, but in the French tongue :

'MADAME,—

'*When your husband is not with you he is with Mdlle. Séraphine of the Chatelet.*'

Marjorie read the letter through twice, then she folded it and put it in her pocket. Caussidière was late home that night; indeed, it was nearly two o'clock before his latch-key was put in the door; yet when he mounted the stairs he found that Marjorie was sitting up for him.

'*Diable,*' what are you doing here?' he asked.

'Where have you been so late, Léon?' she quietly replied.

He stared at her with an ominous frown as he said :

'What is that to you ? Get to bed.'

Seeing well that he was in no mood to be questioned, she obeyed him ; but the next morning, when they were sitting at breakfast, she returned to the subject again.

'Léon,' she said, 'where is it that you go so often when you are away from me ?'

Caussidière looked at her with a new light in his eyes ; then he turned away his head and continued his breakfast.

'What is that to you ?' said he roughly. 'I have many things to do which you cannot understand.'

'And there are things which I *can* understand,' returned Marjorie quietly.

Then she showed him the letter which she had received, and asked calmly, 'Is this true ?'

Caussidière took the letter and read it with a scowl; when he had done so he tore it up and scattered the pieces on the floor.

'Léon,' said Marjorie, 'is it true ?'

'Yes,' he returned. 'My friend Mdlle. Séraphine is entertaining and my wife is not; when a man has a little leisure he does not seek the society of the dullest companion of his acquaintance.'

He quietly went on eating his breakfast, as if the subject were at an end. For a while Marjorie watched him, her face white as death: then she went to him and knelt at his feet.

'Léon,' she said, in a low trembling

voice, 'let us forget the past; maybe it has been my fault; but, indeed, I never meant it, dear. I have been so lonely and so sad, and I have kept apart from you because I thought you wished it, and—yes—because you sometimes seemed so angry that I grew afraid.'

She tried to take his hand, but he thrust her aside.

'Do you think this is the way to win me back?' he said; 'it is more likely to drive me away, for, look you, I dislike scenes, and I have business which demands that I keep cool. There, dry your eyes, and let me finish my meal in peace.'

At that time nothing more was said, but once he was free of the house Caussidière reflected over what had taken place. He was in sore trouble as to what he must do.

To abandon Marjorie meant abandoning the goose which laid him the golden eggs, for without the supplies which Miss Hetherington sent to her daughter, where would Caussidière be? There would be no more suppers and presents for Mademoiselle Séraphine. It was this which had kept him with his wife so long. If the supplies were to stop, he would easily reconcile it with his conscience to abandon her altogether.

But were they likely to stop? Caussidière thought it highly probable. Of late the cheques had been very small indeed, while Miss Hetherington's letters had been very strong in censure. She plainly said that Caussidière's extravagant demands must cease, and that the money which she would be able to send in future would not be more

than enough to supply the wants of Marjorie and her child.

The letter containing this information had set Caussidière thinking. If this source was drained dry, why not try another? At the theatre Mademoiselle Séraphine's salary was large; as her husband he would share it. She had extravagant tastes, it is true: but he as her husband could suppress them; then she as an actress had always the chance of obtaining presents from her numerous admirers, and Caussidière was too much a man of the world to object to her receiving these votive offerings if part of the proceeds went into his own pocket.

But to crown all, Caussidière was infatuated with the piquante and pretty actress, while he was seriously bored by his wife in their humdrum home. There was

nothing whatever in common between him and Marjorie; and even the child of their marriage, though he regarded him with a certain sort of affection, was not enough to cement the union between them. He longed to be free: free to come and go unwatched and unfettered; free to marry Mademoiselle Séraphine if the humour seized him; free to follow any other vagrant amour for which he might have a fancy.

A wife like Marjorie was an obstruction. He could not tell her his plots and plans, she could not enter into his ideas. *Diable!* with a wife like Séraphine, on the contrary, how different it would be! She belonged to his own nation, she could understand him, they could conquer society together! And with the great events, the strange political changes, which were certainly

looming ahead, it was so necessary to be unembarrassed, to have his hands quite free!

One afternoon, as he was about to return home in no very amiable frame of mind, an incident occurred which aroused in his mind a feeling not exactly of jealousy, but of lofty moral indignation. He saw, from the window of a shop where he was making a purchase, Marjorie and little Léon pass by in company with a young man whom he recognised at a glance. He crept to the door, and looked after them, scarcely able to believe his eyes.

Yes, it was real! There were Marjorie and little Léon walking side by side with young Sutherland, his old *bête noir* from Scotland.

Half an hour later, when he reached

home, he found Marjorie quietly seated in the *salon.* He stalked in, livid, and threw himself into a chair.

'Léon!' cried Marjorie, startled by his manner, 'is anything the matter?'

He did not answer, but glared at her with growing fury.

She repeated her question. He was still silent. Then, as she sat trembling, he rose, crossed over, and put his fierce face close to hers.

'Let me look at you! Yes, I see! You are like your mother, the ——'

He concluded with an epithet too coarse for transcription.

She sprang up, pale as death.

'What have I done?' she cried.

'Do you think I am a fool—blind? Do you think I do not know who it is you go

to meet out there? Speak! Answer! How often have you met him?'

And he shook his clenched fist in her face.

'Do you mean my old friend Johnnie Sutherland?' she returned, trembling. 'Oh, Léon, I was so glad to see him; he is so kind—I have known him so long. I saw him one day by chance, and since then——'

'Yet you said nothing to me!'

'It was often on my tongue, but I was afraid. Oh, Léon, you are not angry with me for speaking to an old friend?'

The answer came, but not in words. Uttering a fierce oath, and repeating the savage epithet he had used before, he struck her in the face with all his force, and she fell bleeding and swooning upon the floor.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE REVELATION.

The mask of kindliness having once fallen, Caussidière did not think it worth while to resume it; and from that day forth he completely neglected both Marjorie and her child. The supplies from Miss Hetherington having temporarily ceased, Marjorie was no longer necessary to him; indeed, he was longing to be free, and wondering what means he should adopt to obtain his end.

If Marjorie would only leave him and return to her friends in Scotland the matter would be simple enough, but this she did not seem inclined to do. She thought of her child; for his sake she still clung to the man whom she believed to be her husband.

On the day following that when the cruel blow had been struck, she took little Léon by the hand and walked down to the Champs d'Elysée to meet Sutherland. She wore a thick veil, for the mark of Caussidière's hand was beginning to show itself upon her face, and tried to steady her voice; but the young man saw at once that something had occurred.

'Marjorie,' he said, holding her hand tenderly in his, 'you won't confide in me, but I can see your trouble for all that. Let

me help you, Marjorie, for the sake of the old days.'

She shook her head.

'You can't do that, Johnnie. I—I must never see you again.'

'Marjorie——'

'Ah, don't reproach me, for I can't bear it. Léon was angry at my meeting you, and he said I must not see you any more.'

'He is a coward as well as a scoundrel! Marjorie, you won't submit to it—you will let me take you back to Scotland. Why should you stay here?'

For answer she gently drew her child towards her, and kissed him on the cheek.

'For his sake,' she said; 'my poor, innocent child! I cannot undo the past—I cannot save myself; but I can strive not to bring disgrace upon my boy. After all,

Léon is my husband and his father. God help us!'

Sutherland, utterly beside himself with rage and pity, did all in his power to persuade her to leave her home and go with him to Scotland; but Marjorie was firm, believing as she did that such a step would bring disgrace upon her child. What she suffered she said she had probably a right to suffer; but the child was innocent, and in the eyes of the world he should not be disgraced. So finally Sutherland yielded to her entreaties, and promised not only to avoid meeting her, but to allow Caussidière to go free.

It was a hard blow to him, and when he left her and walked back to his studio he felt that the sun had indeed set for him, and that before his path there was nothing

but the prospect of the darkest misery. It was bad enough before, when he could talk to her and bring her some comfort; but to stand by, and to know that he must see her suffer without a word, was heart-rending.

He had given the promise she asked, but when he reached his home and thought it over, he began to wonder whether or not he had done well. Was it right that he should stand by and see such things? He longed to go to Caussidière and to upbraid him. But then he thought it might make it worse for Marjorie; and since she was determined to keep with the man, it was better that she should be suffered to live in peace.

So he kept his promise, and spent most of his time in his studio painting her face.

It must not be supposed, however, that he neglected Marjorie altogether. Since he could not see her himself, he engaged the services of Adèle Lambert, who had free access to Marjorie, to bring him an account of how matters stood.

Adèle was faithful, for she had taken a great liking to the young Scotchman, and through her he was able to send occasional messages to Marjorie and to little Léon.

At first her accounts were of the most gloomy nature. She told of Caussidière's cruelty and of Marjorie's wretchedness; but very soon her reports changed, or rather they dwindled to absolute nothingness, for Marjorie, discovering that Sutherland and Adèle were acquainted, and suspecting the reason of the French girl's frequent visits, carefully concealed her

troubles, and gave Adèle to understand that things were growing brighter for her.

Such was the condition of affairs in Paris when Sutherland received a summons home. It came in the shape of a telegram, calling him to the death-bed of his father. Sutherland, believing Adèle's last reports were true, thanked God that since he had to leave Marjorie, he could leave her to comparative peace.

About the same time as Sutherland received the telegram, Caussidière was sitting in a private cabinet of the 'Café des Trente Etoiles' with Mademoiselle Séraphine of the Chatelet. The lady was by no means in a good temper, for, her lover's means being low, the entertainment he had been able to give her lately was not

of the choicest ; add to which that for some time past his votive offerings of jewellery had of a necessity ceased. Since her regard for Caussidière varied according to his means, she had not deemed it worth her while to make their interview that day a very pleasant one.

Nevertheless, since she had come, she ate and drank freely of what was there, but as soon as the little dinner was over she began to pull on her gloves.

'Séraphine,' said Caussidière in alarm, 'you are not going ?'

'But I am,' she returned crossly. 'Why should I stay? I have an appointment to sup with the Marquis de Fécamp after the play.'

'And you are going ?'

She shrugged her pretty shoulders.

'Why not?' she asked.

'Because I say so. I forbid it, Séraphine.'

She looked at him for a moment, opening her eyes like a child lost in wonder; then she burst into a peal of silvery laughter.

'That is the best joke I ever heard in my life,' she said. '*You* object! and pray, Monsieur Caussidière, what right have you to object to what I do? I might as well pretend that I must ask leave of the Marquis to eat a lunch with *you*.'

'That is another matter—the Marquis is a married man.'

'And *you!*' she asked, with a sneer.

'I am going to marry you, Séraphine!'

'Ah, truly?—but it is better to be off with one wife before you are on with another,

monsieur; and as madame still pines in Paris, I think I am at liberty to sup with my friends.'

Caussidière said no more. Perhaps he saw it would be dangerous, for Mademoiselle Séraphine's temper was by no means certain; and if matters were pushed too far it seemed not improbable that she would break off the match. So he gloomily helped her on with her cloak, kissed her twice when he said good-bye, and walked towards home with a very dark face indeed.

He had made up his mind that his game of fast and loose must come to an end; hitherto he had shrunk from breaking finally with Marjorie; not from any consideration for her, but because he wished to ascertain if all hope of obtaining increased supplies from Miss Hetherington was at an end. He

saw now that further delay would be dangerous: he must either marry Séraphine or be content to give her up.

He walked on quickly, ruminating as to the best means of beginning his scene with Marjorie, when accident came to his aid; he was within a few yards of his own door when he saw a man emerge from it and walk quickly down the street.

Caussidière caught his breath, and a very ugly look came into his eyes; the man was none other than the one whom he had strictly forbidden his wife to see—John Sutherland!

After a momentary hesitation he entered the house and walked straight to the sitting-room, where he found Marjorie.

She had been crying. At sight of her husband she dried her eyes, but she could not hide her sorrow.

'What are you crying for?' he asked roughly.

'It is nothing, Léon,' she returned.

'It's a lie; you can't deceive me as well as defy me!

'Defy you!'

'Yes, defy me. Didn't I forbid you ever again to seek the company of that accursed Scotchman?'

'Yes,' she returned quietly; 'and I obeyed you. I saw him once again to tell him we must not meet—that was all.'

'I tell you you are a liar!'

Her face flushed crimson.

'Léon,' she said, 'think of the child; say what you please to me, but let us be alone.'

She took the frightened child by the hand, and was about to lead him from the room, when Caussidière interposed.

'No,' he said; 'I shall say what I please to you, and the child shall remain. I tell you you are a liar—that man was here to-day—don't trouble yourself to deny it; I saw him leave the house.'

'I do not wish to deny it,' she returned. 'Yes, he was here!'

The tears had come into her eyes again; she passed her arm around the shoulders of her boy, who clung tremblingly to her.

'Why was he here?' continued Caussidière furiously.

'He came to say good-bye. He is going to Scotland—his father is dying.'

She bowed her head and laid her lips on the forehead of her child.

'Why did you not go with him?'

She raised her head and looked at him with weary, sorrowful eyes.

'Why did I not go?' she said. 'Ah, Léon, do not ask me that—is it the duty of a wife to leave her husband and her child?'

'Her husband!' he said, with a sneer. 'Ah, well, since you are pleased to put it so, *your husband* gives you permission, and for the brat, why, you may take him too.'

'Léon!'

'Well?'

'What do you mean?'

'What I say, *mon amie;* I generally do!'

'You wish me to leave you?'

He shrugged his shoulders.

'I think *you* would be better in Scotland, and I should be better *free.*'

Again she looked at him in wonder. What did it all mean? She could not believe that he was speaking the truth.

He had been dining perhaps, and drinking too much wine—as he had done so often of late—and he did not know what he said. Perhaps it would not be well for her to provoke him, she thought, so she said nothing. She turned from her husband, took little Léon into her arms and tried to soothe him, for the child was trembling with fear.

But Caussidière was not to be silenced.

'Did you hear what I say?' he asked.

'Yes, Léon, I heard.'

'Then heed.'

She rose from her seat, still keeping the child in her arms, and again moved towards the door.

'Let me put Léon to bed,' she said, 'he is very tired; then I will come back and talk to you.'

'You will talk to me *now*, madame. Put the child down. I tell you it will be better for *you* if you do as I say.'

'To do *what*, Léon?' she demanded, with quivering lips and streaming eyes.

'To go back to your mother; to tell her that we do not agree, or any other nonsense you please, except the truth. We are better apart. We have nothing in common. We belong to different nations —nations which, for the rest, have always hated each other. So let us shake hands and part company—the sooner the better.'

The mask had fallen indeed! Poor Marjorie read in the man's livid face not merely weariness and satiety, but positive dislike, black almost as hate itself. She clasped her child and uttered a despairing cry.

'You can't mean it, Léon! No, no, you

do not mean what you say!' she moaned, sinking into a chair, and covering her face with her hand.

'Mamma, mamma!' cried little Léon. 'Do not cry.'

She drew him convulsively to her, and gazed again at Caussidière. He was standing on the hearthrug, looking at her with a nervous scowl.

'It is useless to make a scene,' he said. 'Understand me once for all, Marjorie. I want my freedom. I have great work on hand, and I cannot pursue it rightly if encumbered by *you*.'

'You should have thought of that before,' she sobbed. 'You used to love me; God knows what has turned your heart against me. But I am your wife; nothing can part us now.'

'Do you really deceive yourself so much?' he demanded coldly. 'Then hear the truth from me. You are no wife of mine!'

'Not your wife!' she cried.

'Certainly not. My mistress, if you please, who has been suffered for a time to bear my name; that is all.'

She sprang up as if shot through the heart, and faced him, pale as death.

'We are married! We stood together before the altar, Léon. I have my marriage lines.'

'Which are so much waste paper, my dear, here in France!'

Sick with horror and fear, she tottered to him and clutched him by the arm.

'Léon! once more, what do you mean?'

'My meaning is very simple,' he replied;

'the marriage of an Englishwoman with a French citizen is no marriage, unless the civil ceremony has also been performed in France. Now, do you understand?'

'I am not your wife! not your wife!' cried Marjorie, stupefied.

'Not here in France,' answered Caussidière.

'Then the child—our child?'

'Trouble not yourself about him,' was the reply. 'If you are reasonable he can easily be legitimized according to our laws; but nothing on earth can make us two man and wife so long as I remain on French soil.'

He added coldly:

'And I have no intention of again expatriating myself, I assure you!'

It was enough. Dazed and mystified as she was, Marjorie now understood plainly

the utter villainy of the man with whom she had to deal. She had neither power nor will for further words. She gave one long, despairing, horrified look into the man's face, and then, drawing the child with her, staggered into the inner room and closed the door behind her.

Caussidière remained for some time in his old position, frowning gloomily. For the moment he almost hated himself, as even a scoundrel can do upon occasion; but he thought of Séraphine and recovered his self-possession. He walked to the door, and listened; all was still, save a low murmuring sound, as of suppressed sobbing.

He hesitated for a moment; then, setting his lips tight, he lifted his hat and quietly descended the stairs.

* * * * *

When the great clock of our Lady of Paris chimed. forth five, Marjorie still sat in her room, staring vacantly into the grate. The room was bitterly cold; the light of the candles was growing dim before the more cheerless light of dawn; the last spark of fire had died away; and the child, wearied with fatigue and fear, slept soundly in her arms.

Marjorie, awaking from her trance, was astonished to see the dawn breaking, and to hear the chiming clocks announce that another day had begun.

She looked for a moment into the child's face, and as she did so her body trembled, and her eyes filled with tears.

'My little boy!' she sobbed; 'my poor little Léon!'

She laid him gently on the bed, and let

him sleep on. Then she tried to collect her thoughts, and to determine what she must do.

'Go back to Scotland?' No, she could not do that. She could not face her old friends with this shame upon her, and show them the child who should never have been born. From that day forth she must be dead to them. What she could not undo she must conceal.

She had a little money about her, a small cheque received from Miss Hetherington on the previous day; this would enable her to ward off starvation at least for a time. In the meantime she must seek work, and by that means sustain herself and her boy.

She collected together a few things which were necessary for their comfort, and when her preparations were made she knelt by the

couch and woke the child. The little fellow stared at her for a moment, then he seemed to remember what had passed, and he clung to her in fear.

'Where is papa?' he asked.

'Papa is gone, my darling!'

He looked at her again for a moment, then his little arms stole round her neck, and he laid his cheek against hers.

'Poor mamma!' he said.

Marjorie clasped him to her breast and sobbed convulsively.

'Ah, Léon,' she murmured, 'you are all that is left to me now; and yet perhaps it would be better for you to die!'

She continued her preparations, and when all was done she still lingered in the house, as if fearing to face the world.

At length she remembered Sutherland,

remembered her pledge to him, and she resolved to keep it.

She would go to him, tell him part, if not all her story, and ask his advice.

She took little Léon by the hand and left the house, passing hurriedly through the streets, until she came to Sutherland's lodgings.

She inquired for him, and found to her dismay that he was already gone. He had left the rooms on the previous night and returned to Scotland.

When she first heard the news, Marjorie felt as if her last hope had gone indeed, and she moved away trembling and almost in tears; but after a moment's reflection she acknowledged to herself that perhaps, after all, it was for the best.

What possible good could have resulted

from an interview with Sutherland? She would in all probability have brought trouble upon him by telling him her own, and she had worked mischief enough already to all her kin. No; she would trouble them no more, but, with little Léon to comfort her, she would remain as one dead, buried in the great city where she had not even one friend.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOMELESS.

One bitterly cold night early in the month of November, the gendarme whose duty it was to patrol the Rue Caumartin suddenly espied a woman with a child in her arms crouching for shelter in a doorway.

He stopped, looked at her curiously, stooped down to look at her more closely, and demanded her business there. The woman stirred but did not rise, and the child, which she held clasped closely to

her, uttered a feeble cry. The gendarme paused a moment, then he bent down, took her by the shoulder, and gave her a vigorous shake.

This time the woman rose, wearily and slowly, like one in physical pain; and the child clung to her skirts, and cried again. She lifted him in her arms, and passed with a slow tottering step down the street.

She was but poorly clad for such weather. Her garments were threadbare, and here and there they hung in rags about her, so she shivered and shrank before every touch of the frozen wind. The streets were dark and almost deserted, save for the gendarmes who paced with their measured tread up and down the silent streets. They looked at her as she went by, and thought of her no more. She

passed along until she came to the Champs d'Elysée; then she turned aside, and, hiding herself among the trees, lay down upon one of the seats. The child cried feebly again, but she soothed him and again clasped him fondly to her, and so the two fell asleep.

A faint cry awakened the woman in the morning. She opened her eyes, and as she did so she saw the pale pinched face of her child turned towards her, and heard him feebly crying for bread. With a moan, she threw her arms into the air, and cried:

'Bread, my child; I have no bread, and you are starving!'

The ground was frozen, and snow was falling; her hands and feet were benumbed, and her face was pinched with cold and hunger. She spoke to her little

boy in French; and not one of those who had known her in earlier days would have recognised Marjorie Annan. Yet it was Marjorie—a starving woman looking at her starving child.

Two months had passed since she had left Caussidière, and ever since that day her troubles had increased. On finding that Sutherland had quitted the city, a sense of relief had come over her, and she determined to follow her first impulse to live alone in Paris and to devote her whole life to her boy. She had very little money, but she believed that the means of living were entirely in her own hands; for she had been tolerably well educated, and through her long residence abroad spoke French fluently.

Her first care was to take rooms and see

little Léon comfortably though cheaply housed; then she looked about for employment. It was a difficult thing to find, friendless as she was; but at length she succeeded. She applied to a cheap bourgeois school, and as the terms she asked for her services were absurdly low, she was engaged as English teacher, and little Léon was admitted as a pupil in the school.

It was a life of drudgery, but in her simple way Marjorie was content. It was something to see her child bright and happy, and to know that he, the little outcast, was under safe protection. But Marjorie's troubles were not to be so easily laid aside. One morning as her work was about to begin she was sent for to the room of the principal, and quietly told by

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that person to leave the building with her child. In some unaccountable way her story, or some perversion of it, had become known, and she was no longer deemed a fit instructress for innocent children.

At first Marjorie was struck dumb, then she gave a heart-broken cry for mercy. But in vain. The lady was sorry but relentless.

'It would not do,' she said. 'I am sorry, but you must look to others for help: I cannot give it. If you remain in this house what will the result be? My pupils will all leave, and I shall be ruined.'

So Marjorie had to go.

For a time she was too much broken down to ask for work again; in fact, she was at her wits' end to know what to do; but the little store in her purse sank so

rapidly that she saw want coming on. She roused herself, and once more faced the world.

There were few things she could do beside teaching; and she knew it would be useless to enter a school again. It would simply mean a repetition of what she had undergone; but she thought that by working at home she could offend no one.

She tried to get sewing in vain. She had no recommendations, and no one would trust her. She applied for house work with the same result. She was friendless, and no one would trust her inside their doors. Her purse was getting lighter and lighter, and the direst kind of poverty was staring her in the face.

What was she to do? The only thing she could do was to write and ask help

of her friends. It was a last resource, and Marjorie shrank from it ; but her reluctance disappeared when she looked at her child : it was for his sake.

She wrote to Miss Hetherington asking for a little help. She waited several days, but received no reply ; three weeks passed and no answer came, while Marjorie was penniless. Up to this she had had at least the shelter of a roof; but now that her little store of money was exhausted, she was once more driven forth, with this time only the bare streets before her.

For several days she had been wandering in the streets, spending her few sous in bread in the daytime and sleeping at night in dark doorways or such places as afforded shelter. During these few days she had scarcely tasted food, but had given her little

all to her child. Now there was nothing left even for him, and he was starving. His pitiful cry for bread wrung her heart; she clasped him to her, and as she bent above him whispering words of love, the scalding tears coursed slowly down her cheeks.

It seemed that she must beg or starve.

She looked about her in a vague, hopeless way, and shivered. All the trees about her were nipped with the early frost, and the ground was white with snow.

Sick and depressed, she sat down on a bench near the Arc de Triomphe and wept bitterly. It was now broad daylight, and troops of workmen were passing along to their day's labour, women were passing along with heavy burdens, pretty sempstresses tripping along to the shops where they served all day; and in the open road

a stream of country carts, laden with produce, was flowing in from the town gate.

No one noticed Marjorie, those who did glance at her seeing nothing to distinguish her from the other waifs to be found in all large cities. But presently she saw coming towards her a burly figure, carrying on its shoulders a piece of wood, from which depended two heavy cans. It was the figure of a woman, though one of man-like strength, who, to complete the masculine appearance, sported a black moustache and a whisker-like down on either cheek.

The woman was singing in a deep man's voice. She was about to pass by when she was attracted by little Léon.

'A thousand devils!' she muttered to herself; then, striding towards the bench,

she demanded, 'What's the matter? Is the child ill?'

Marjorie looked up and met the gleam of two great black eyes, bold but kindly. She could not speak, but turning her head aside, sobbed again.

'Poor little mother,' growled the stranger to herself. 'She is almost a child herself. Look up! Speak to me! What are you doing here?'

The tone was so gentle and sympathetic, though the voice and address were rough, that Marjorie cried in despair, from the bottom of her heart:

'Oh, madame, we have been here all night, and my little boy is starving!'

'Starving—the devil!' cried the woman. 'Do you mean it?'

As she spoke she stooped down, freed

herself of her load, and rested her cans upon the ground; then, opening one of them, she took out a tin vessel brimful of milk.

'See here—it is milk, milk of the cow! Let the little one drink.'

Eagerly and gratefully Marjorie took the vessel and held it with trembling hand to the child's lips; he drank it thirstily, every drop.

'Bravo!' cried the stranger, filling the can again. 'Encore! Another, little man!'

And little Léon drank eagerly again.

'God bless you, madame!' said Marjorie. 'How good you are!'

'Good—the devil! I am Mother Jeanne, and I have had little ones of my own. Now, it is your turn, little woman.'

Thus urged, Marjorie drank too. Mother Jeanne watched her with grim compassion.

'You are too frail to be out in this weather. Who are you? You are not a Frenchwoman by your tongue.'

'No, madame. I came from Scotland, but I have been in Paris a long time.'

'Where do you live, eh?'

'I have no home, and no money.'

'And no friends? The devil!'

'Not one.'

'And what are you going to do?'

'I do not know. It is a long time since we have tasted food. I——'

Marjorie sank back, and would have fallen had not the woman's strong arm supported her.

'Bad, very bad!' growled Mother Jeanne. 'See, here are two sous; it is all I have, but

it will buy something for the child. After that, I will tell you what to do. Out yonder, close to the Madeleine, they will distribute bread to the poor of the arrondissement at ten o'clock. You will go there and take your place with the rest; they must help you—they cannot refuse. Do you understand?'

'Yes, madame, I will go.'

'That's right,' said Mother Jeanne, patting her on the shoulder. 'And after that, let me see—yes, after that, if you are English, you will go to the British Embassy and ask them for assistance.'

'Yes, madame,' answered Marjorie sadly.

'Courage. The little one is better already. He will be all right by-and-by. But I cannot linger, little woman. My customers are waiting, and I have yet to

prepare the milk for the market. You will go to the distribution of bread, will you not? Any one will show you the place.'

Marjorie promised, clinging, as she did so, to the good creature, and gratefully kissing her hard hands. Mother Jeanne was touched. She brushed away a tear with the back of her hand, and uttered another sympathetic imprecation.

'And if all else fails you,' she cried, 'come to me, Mother Jeanne, at the Dairy, Rue de Caporal. I am poor, look you, but I would not let you starve. Remember, Mother Jeanne—Mother Moustache they call me sometimes—13, Rue de Caporal.'

And with a rough nod the good soul shouldered her cans and strode along. Poor Mother Jeanne! She was but one of the people, a common creature, with a rude

visage and a coarse tongue; but as she glides for ever out of our story, let us be sure that the record of her oaths, like that of the famous imprecation of Uncle Toby, was blotted out by the tears of the Registering Angel.

Marjorie watched her till she faded out of sight; then, refreshed and strengthened by the healthful draught, she took little Léon by the hand and walked away towards the crowded streets.

* * * * *

Later in the day Marjorie, with the boy by her side, took her place in the long *queue* of poor which defiled into the doors of the great bakery in one of the narrow streets behind the Madeleine.

No one spoke to her, no one heeded her; all were too intent on their own needs. Old

men and women, mothers with babies at the breast, *ouvriers* out at elbow, ragged urchins, formed the eager crowd. One by one they entered the open door, and passed out at another side door laden with their allotment of bread.

It took a long time for Marjorie to reach the entrance ; but at last she came in view of the long counter, with its piles of bread, its bakers in white suits and caps making the distribution, and a clerk in uniform taking down the names of those who sought and received relief.

Haggard and wearied out, Marjorie came up to the counter, and faced a burly figure with a red face and a rough impatient manner.

'Well, your ticket!' cried this worthy sharply.

'I have none, monsieur, but I am starving!'

'No ticket — then I cannot help you. There, stand aside!'

'Monsieur, for the love of God!'

Startled by the wild appeal, the clerk in uniform looked at Marjorie.

'Who are you?' he demanded. 'Do you belong to this arrondissement?'

'I do not know, but I want food; I——'

'What is your name?'

'Madame Caussidière!'

'Caussidière!' repeated the official. 'The name is French, but you speak with an English accent!'

Here a shrill voice, belonging to some wretched woman in the background, screamed out loudly:

'Monsieur Gavrolles, she is a stranger! She has no right to claim relief while French citizens are starving!'

'Hold your tongue!' shouted the official; then, turning to Marjorie, he said sternly, 'But the old fool is right! you cannot get help here!'

'Monsieur! one morsel—for my child!'

'It is impossible. There, make room. The next!'

It was useless to plead and pray. Trembling and crying, Marjorie found herself hustled by the crowd back into the open street. She clutched little Léon by the hand, and uttered a low wail of despair as she tottered away from the place.

Suddenly, as she went, she heard a voice at her back calling to her, and turning, she found herself face to face with a ragged figure leaning upon two crutches and holding two loaves of bread. He was a young

man of about thirty years of age, emaciated by want and disease, and a cripple from birth.

'Look, madame!' he cried. 'I heard them deny you, and though you are not a *compatriote* I think it is a shame. They have given me two loaves—you shall have one, if you will accept it!'

But Marjorie shook her head.

'You are good, ah! very good; but I must not rob you of what you need so much.'

'I do not want it,' returned the cripple. 'I am not long in this world, and for the rest, to be hungry is nothing new. Take it, madame, for the sake of the child!'

And pressing it in her trembling hands, he shuffled hastily away.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A LONG JOURNEY.

ABOUT the very time that Marjorie was wandering homeless and hungry in the streets of Paris, two persons were journeying towards the city of London by the night mail.

One was Miss Hetherington of the Castle; the other was John Sutherland.

For fully an hour neither of them had spoken; the old lady, looking fully twenty years older than when we last beheld her,

lay back among the cushions of the carriage, and fixed her eyes upon a letter which she held in her hand. For about the tenth time that night she raised the paper, and read the words which were hastily scrawled thereon :

'DEAR MOTHER,—

'I am in great trouble. I am in sore need. Will you help me ? I do not mind for myself, but to see my little child in want breaks my heart.

'MARJORIE.'

She read it through ; then with a moan she let it fall again upon her lap.

'Marjorie !' she cried, 'my bairn, my bairn !'

From his corner of the carriage Sutherland watched in silence. He was utterly

in the dark as to what it all meant. He only knew that they were travelling to Paris and to Marjorie.

On the day before, as he had been quietly working at his pictures at home, his father having partially recovered, Miss Hetherington, whom he believed to be in Edinburgh, had suddenly appeared like a spectre before him, and without a word of explanation had commanded him to return with her to Paris.

On hastening with her to the Castle he found that a stormy scene had been enacted there; that Miss Hetherington, beside herself with rage, had actually struck her old attendant in the face, and turned her from the door. What it was all about nobody seemed to know, and after one glance into Miss Hetherington's wild eyes Sutherland knew that he had better not

inquire. So he quietly obeyed her orders, and the two started together by the night mail for the south.

But although Sutherland had been silent he had been none the less curious; and now, seeing that Miss Hetherington's wild excitement was passing away, he ventured to speak.

'Miss Hetherington!' cried Johnnie Sutherland. 'Is that a letter from Marjorie?'

'Ay, from Marjorie.'

She held forth her thin white hand, which now was trembling violently, and as Sutherland took the letter she uttered a low moan again, and for the first time that night her tears began to fall.

Sutherland read the letter, then he looked at the date, and exclaimed:

'October! why, it's more than four weeks old!'

'Ay, more than four weeks!' she moaned; then suddenly sitting erect, and looking fixedly into his face, she added: 'Johnnie Sutherland, what has happened to her *now?*'

'God knows; but maybe after all we are in time; but how did it chance to be so long in coming to you?'

'It went to the Castle, Johnnie, and Mysie kept it there. When I came home from Edinburgh yesterday I found it lying on my desk waiting on me. It had been waiting on me for a month, you see.'

Sutherland was silent. He was more troubled than he cared to say. A month! Ah! he thought, what might not happen in that time to a woman and child penniless and alone in the streets of Paris!

He returned the letter with a sigh, and did all he could to rouse and cheer his companion, who, now that her excitement was over, suffered from a frightful reaction, and trembled and cried like a child.

They passed through London, and at last reached Paris.

On arriving at the station, Sutherland called up a fly, and ordered it to drive with the greatest possible speed to the Hôtel Suisse, a quiet establishment close to the boulevards. Once there, he ordered a private room, conducted Miss Hetherington to it, and proposed that she should wait there while he went in search of Marjorie.

At first she rebelled, but she yielded at last.

'Yes, I will wait,' she said. 'I am feeble, as you say, Johnnie Sutherland, and

no fit to face the fog and snow; but you'll bring the bairn to me, for I cannot wait long!'

Eagerly giving his promise, Sutherland started off, and the old lady, unable to master her excitement, walked feebly about the room, preparing for the appearance of her child.

She had the fire piled up; she had the table laden with food and wine; then she took her stand by the window, and eagerly scanned the face of every passer-by. At length, and after what seemed to her to be hours of agony, Sutherland returned.

He was alone.

'The bairn; the bairn!' she cried, tottering towards him.

He made one quick step towards her, and caught her in his arms as he replied:

'Dear Miss Hetherington, she has gone!'

For a moment she did not seem able to understand him; she stared at him blankly and repeated:

'Gone! where is she gone?'

'I do not know; several weeks ago she left this place with her child, and she has not been seen since!'

The old woman's agony was pitiful to see: she moaned, and with her trembling fingers clutched her thin grey hair.

'Gone!' she moaned. 'Ah, my God, she is in the streets, she is starving!'

Suddenly a new resolution came to her—with an effort she pulled herself together. She wrapt her heavy fur cloak around her, and moved towards the door.

'Where are you going?' demanded Sutherland.

She turned round upon him with livid and death-like face.

'Going!' she repeated, in a terrible voice. 'I am going to *him!*—to the villain who first learned my secret and stole my bairn awa'!'

Miss Hetherington spoke firmly, showing as much by her manner as by her speech that her determination was fixed. Sutherland therefore made no attempt to oppose her; but he called up a fly, and the two drove to the lodgings which had been formerly occupied by Marjorie and Caussidière.

To Sutherland's dismay, the rooms were empty, Caussidière having disappeared and left no trace behind him. For a moment he was at a loss what to do.

Suddenly he remembered Adèle, and

resolved to seek assistance from her. Yet here again he was at a loss. It would be all very well for him to seek out Adèle at the *café*, but to take Miss Hetherington there was another matter. He therefore asked her to return to the hotel and wait quietly there while he continued the search.

This she positively refused to do.

'Come awa', Johnnie Sutherland,' she said, 'and take me with you. If I'm a woman I'm an old one, and no matter where I gang I mean to find my child.'

At seven o'clock that night the *café* was brilliantly lit and crowded with a roisterous company. Adèle, flushed and triumphant, having sung one of her most popular songs, was astonished to see a man beckoning to her from the audience. Looking again,

she saw that the man was none other than the young artist—Sutherland.

Descending from her rostrum, she eagerly went forward to join him, and the two passed out of the *café* and stood confronting each other in the street.

'Adèle,' said Sutherland, eagerly seizing her hands, 'where is that man—Caussidière?'

'Caussidière?' she repeated, staring at him in seeming amazement.

'Yes, Caussidière! Tell me where he is, for God's sake!'

Again Adèle hesitated—something had happened, of that she felt sure, for the man who now stood before her was certainly not the Sutherland of other days; there was a look in his eyes which had never been there before.

'Monsieur,' she said gently, 'tell me first where is madame his wife?'

'God knows! I want to find her. I have come to Paris with her mother to force that villain to give her up. Adèle, if you do not know her whereabouts, tell me where *he* is.'

She hesitated for a moment, then drew from her pocket a piece of paper, scribbled something on it in pencil, and pressed it into Sutherland's hand.

'Monsieur,' she whispered, 'if you find her I—I may sèe her? once—only once again?'

'Yes.'

'God bless you, monsieur!'

She seized his hand and eagerly pressed it to her lips; then, hastily brushing away a tear, she re-entered the *café*, and was

soon delighting her coarse admirers with another song.

Sutherland had been too much carried away by the work he had in hand to notice Adèle's emotion. He opened the paper she had given him, and read the address by the aid of the street lamp; then he returned to the fly, which stood waiting for him at the kerbstone. He gave his directions to the driver; then entered the vehicle, taking his seat beside Miss Hetherington, who sat there like a statue.

The vehicle drove off through a series of well-populated streets; then it stopped. Sutherland leapt out, and to his confusion Miss Hetherington rose to follow him. He made no attempt to oppose her, knowing well that any such attempt would be useless.

So the two went together up a darkened

court, and paused before a door. In answer to Sutherland's knock a little maid appeared, and he inquired in as firm a voice as he could command for Monsieur Caussidière.

Yes, Monsieur Caussidière was at home, she said, and if the gentleman would give his name she would take it; but this Sutherland could not do. He slipped a napoleon into the girl's hand, and after a momentary hesitation she showed the two into the very room where the Frenchman sat.

He was dressed not in his usual dandified fashion, but in a seedy morning coat; his face looked haggard. He was seated at a table with piles of paper before him. He looked up quietly when the door opened; then seeing Miss Hetherington, who had been the first to enter the room, he started to his feet.

'Madame!' he exclaimed in French, 'or shall I say Mademoiselle, Hetherington?'

'Yes,' she returned quietly, in the same tongue, 'Miss Hetherington. 'I have come to you, villain that you are, for my child!'

'Your child?'

'Ay, my daughter, my Marjorie! Where is she, tell me?'

By this time Caussidière had recovered from his surprise. He was still rather frightened, but he conquered himself sufficiently to shrug his shoulders, sneer, and reply:

'Really, madame, or mademoiselle, your violence is unnecessary. I know nothing of your daughter: she left me of her own free will, and I request you to leave my house.'

But the old lady stood firm.

'I will not stir,' she exclaimed, 'until I

have my Marjorie. You took her from her home, and brought her here. What have you done with her? If harm has come to her through you, look to yourself.'

The Frenchman's face grew livid; he made one step towards her, then he drew back.

'Leave my house,' he said, pointing to the door; 'the person of whom you speak is nothing to me.'

'It is false; she is your wife.'

'She is *not* my wife! she was my mistress, nothing more!'

Scarcely had the words passed his lips when the Frenchman felt himself seized by the throat, and violently hurled upon the ground. He leapt to his feet again, and once more felt Sutherland's hard hands gripping his throat.

'Coward as well as liar,' cried the young

Scotchman ; 'retract what you have said, or, by God! I'll strangle you!'

The Frenchman said nothing, but he struggled hard to free himself from the other's fierce clutch, while Miss Hetherington stood grimly looking on.

Presently Caussidière shook himself free, and sank exhausted into a chair.

'You villain!' he hissed ; 'you shall suffer for this. I will seek police protection. I will have you cast into prison. Yes, you shall utterly rue the day when you dared to lay a finger upon *me*.'

But Sutherland paid no heed. Finding that in reality Caussidière knew as little of Marjorie's whereabouts as he knew himself, he at last persuaded Miss Hetherington to leave the place.

They drove to the Prefect of Police to set

some inquiries on foot: then they went back to the *café* to make further inquiries of Adèle. On one thing they were determined: not to rest night or day until they had found Marjorie—alive or dead.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LIGHT IN THE DARK.

When Miss Hetherington was hastening to confront Caussidière, Marjorie with her child was walking wearily through the streets of Paris.

As the daylight faded away the cold had increased ; the snow was falling heavily, soaking her through and through. She felt sick and faint ; she had given little Léon the bread which the cripple had given to her ; but nothing had passed her lips

since the draught of milk in the morning. Want of food, exposure to the cold, were beginning to deprive her of her senses; but she tried to pull herself together for the sake of her suffering child.

What was she to do? It seemed that both she and her child must die in the streets that night.

Suddenly she remembered what the milk-woman had told her; she would go to the English Ambassador—perhaps he would give her relief and enable her to get home.

She paused once or twice to ask her way, but she could get no answer. She was nothing more than a street waif, and was accordingly thrust aside as such. At last a little gamin gave her the information she

asked. The place she sought was three miles off.

Three miles! She was footsore and faint; she had not a sou in her pocket; and her child was fainting with cold and hunger. It seemed to her that her last hope had gone.

She crept up a dark court, sat down upon the ground, took little Léon on to her lap, and cried. There was nothing left but to die. She folded her arms about the child, and, uttering a silent prayer to God, closed her troubled eyes.

How long she sat thus she did not know —she was falling into a strange sleep-trance when she felt a hand laid upon her shoulder. Looking up, she saw before her the figure of a woman holding a lanthorn; her face was bent down towards her; her

hand still rested with a heavy touch upon her shoulder.

Marjorie gazed at the face for a moment, as if trying to comprehend; then she closed her eyes again, and sank with a moan upon the ground.

'Wake up!' said a shrill voice. 'What are you doing here?'

Marjorie opened her eyes again; then she showed the white face of her child, which was lying upon her shoulder.

'Who are you?' said the stranger. 'Why do you not go home?'

'I have no home,' answered Marjorie, with a low wail of pain.

The stranger stooped down and looked scrutinizingly into her face, and Marjorie faintly perceived, by the dim lanthorn light, the puckered cheeks, heavy black eyebrows,

and glittering eyes of a little old woman about seventy years of age. The old woman was almost bent double; on her back she carried a large basketful of rags, pieces of dirty paper, and other *débris*, and in her left hand she held a heavy staff with a sharp iron point. She was, in fact, one of the old *chiffonières*, or rag-pickers, who haunt the midnight streets of Paris.

Marjorie looked at her in wonder; then she replied faintly:

'I have no home.'

'And no money to buy a night's lodging?'

'Alas, no, madame!'

'You are English, by your tongue?'

'Yes.'

'Is the child yours?'

'Yes.'

'Have you no friends?'

'None.'

The old woman gave a grunt of mingled sympathy and surprise. She was used to scenes of sorrow, but the mother's beautiful face and the child's patient suffering did not fail to touch her heart. She stood peering down with her black eyes, and wagging her head from side to side.

'It is bitterly cold!' she muttered. 'Even I, who am ever on my feet, can scarcely keep myself warm. You will be frozen if you stop here!'

Marjorie only moaned in reply. Presently the old woman fumbled in her pocket, and drew forth a small glass bottle, which she uncorked with trembling hand.

'Here, take a sip of this!' she said. 'It is good brandy!'

Thus urged, Marjorie put her lips to the bottle, and tasted its contents; but the coarse raw spirit caught her breath, and almost choked her. The old woman laughed feebly, and applying the bottle to her own lips, drank, and smacked her lips with relish.

'Oh, if you knew it, this is the stuff to put warmth into you, life and warmth! Ha, ha! when you are as old as I am, and have seen as much of the world, you will worship St. Eau de Vie above all the saints in the calendar. But now, tell me of yourself, Englishwoman! What has happened? What do you mean to do?'

A series of sharp questions elicited from Marjorie some information concerning the true state of affairs; her marriage with the Frenchman, her subsequent discovery and

trouble, her struggle to earn bread, her miserable wanderings in the stony streets of Paris.

The old woman listened, and from time to time uttered a shrill exclamation.

'It is the old story, Englishwoman. Your trouble comes, like all the trouble in the world, from the men. Have you been to the Embassy, and asked help there?'

Marjorie shook her head.

'I tried to go, but it was so far—and I felt so faint—and I crept in here.'

The old woman peered out through the gloomy archway of the court. The snow was falling whitely—'a moving trouble' (as the poet sings) in the heart of darkness; and an icy cold was sweeping in from the street, and piling the loose drift knee-deep at the court's mouth.

'*Diable*, what a night! And the child, he is half-frozen! I tell you, English-woman, you will perish if you stay here.'

'God help me!' moaned Marjorie.

'Listen to me! Do you know the House of Refuge in the Rue de Dieppe?'

Marjorie shook her head.

'It is not far. I will show you the way. Have you strength to walk?'

'I will try, madame;' and so saying, Marjorie rose feebly to her feet. As she did so, she staggered and almost fell.

'Courage! Take another little sip of mother's milk!'

The old woman held the bottle to Marjorie's lips. Faint and despairing, Marjorie sipped the fiery stuff again, and though it scalded her mouth and throat, she felt it

almost immediately send a revivifying thrill along her veins.

She stooped down, lifted little Léon, who had fallen into a sort of stupefied doze, and covered him fondly with the folds of her cloak. Then, preceded by the old woman, who flitted before her holding the lanthorn in her hand, she tottered out into the open street.

The wind struck her at the entrance of the court: she stumbled through the snow, falling and driven. All the air was black, but the troubled whiteness flashed and faded on every side. It was a wild night and bitterly cold. Half awaking, little Léon cried and struggled in her arms.

'This way, Englishwoman!' cried her guide, creeping and crawling rather than walking along the ground.

So they staggered on along the empty street; now pausing and cowering, as the wind tore at them and the snow covered them; now pausing and resting against the chilly walls or smothered window sills, uttering low cries and moans as they went, blinded by the cruel snow. Whither they went poor Marjorie could scarcely tell, but the old *chiffonière* knew every inch of the road. Along snow-piled streets, down miserable alleys, past rayless public buildings and the lighted windows of houses where the denizens were still awake, they struggled on; and at every step the way grew darker, the window lights fewer, the snow deeper, the wind more fierce and shrill.

At last the old woman halted at the corner of a narrow street.

'This is the Rue de Dieppe,' she cried. 'Go right down till you see on the right hand a large door with a light burning above it, and an iron bell. Ring the bell, and they will come. I must leave you here, Englishwoman, for I have far to go.'

'No, no; do not leave me,' moaned Marjorie, clinging to her. 'You have been so good. If you leave me I shall die.'

'I have done all I can, Englishwoman,' returned the other, disengaging herself. 'Go in to the Refuge—they will receive you, no doubt. For myself, I must hasten, or I shall perish in the snow.'

Before Marjorie could restrain her, she flitted away with a feeble 'good-night' into the darkness. Marjorie staggered, uttered

a despairing cry, and leant back, stupefied, against the corner of the street.

For a moment her senses seemed about to forsake her. The pavement rocked under her, her head went round and round. A cry from the child, who stirred feebly in her arms, recalled her to herself. She glanced down the gloomy street. Hope lay that way, and it was her last chance. She set her face against the wind and snow and feebly tottered on.

The child was a heavy load to be borne by one so slight and frail, but her eager maternal love still gave her strength. She little cared now what became of herself; better perhaps if she did not live to see the rising of another sun; but come what might she would save the child, her darling, her little Léon. If she could only retain

sufficient force to carry him to some shelter, to place him in some kindly protecting arms, she would be content.

Step by step, inch by inch, she struggled on. At last she saw streaming across the street before her a bright, beckoning light.

The sight of it sent a thrill of hope to her heart, and energized all her failing forces. She crept on more quickly.

The light was twofold—part streamed from a large window on the ground floor overlooking the street, part was shed from a large lamp suspended over an adjoining door.

She clutched the window sill, which was heaped with snow, and endeavoured to look in. The lower part of the window was covered by a sort of wire blind, which

was quite opaque and impenetrable to the gaze ; but there was a small open space at the side which commanded a view of the interior.

Still clutching little Léon, Marjorie peered in.

For a moment the light from within dazzled her, and she could see nothing. Then, slowly and at first dimly, she discerned the interior of a plainly furnished chamber, in which a large fire was burning, shedding a crimson light on the surrounding walls. On the mantelpiece was a plaster cast of Thorwaldsen's exquisite Christ, and suspended on the wall above it a large engraving of a popular picture, 'Our Saviour and the Woman taken in Adultery.' Other pictures, chiefly of Scripture themes, were hung upon the walls.

The room contained four human beings.

Two women, very ragged and woe-begone, were seated in crouching attitudes before the fire, conversing in monosyllables with an elderly female, dressed in black, with muslin cap and apron, and resembling a superior kind of domestic servant or nurse. The face of this female was somewhat hard and forbidding, and there was nothing in it to excite sympathy or awaken confidence.

But, gazing beyond these three figures, Marjorie saw, in the fourth occupant of the chamber, a form which at once riveted her gaze. This form also was that of a woman, but so different from the others—in beauty, in distinction, in all that constitutes genuine grace and charm—that no one could look upon her without a certain respect and awe.

This lady was seated at a large desk, somewhat like the desks used in offices, quietly writing. The light of a lamp, hung close above her head, streamed down upon her golden hair thickly sprinkled with grey, her pale Madonna-like features, her tall graceful figure, and her small white hands.

She was about five-and-thirty years of age, and looked even younger, until, on closer inspection, the threads of grey hair were perceived, and the faint lines made by time and suffering, or both combined, became revealed. She was plainly dressed in black, with snowy collars and cuffs, and a light cap of muslin or some such light material.

She was beautiful still, though the first loveliness of her youth had passed. Every

look and gesture betokened gentle birth and breeding.

As Marjorie gazed, the lady turned towards the woman, said something and smiled. The smile was of ineffable sweetness, and made the gentle face, which had been beautiful before, almost divine in its expression. So at least thought Marjorie, who had never before encountered so tender a vision.

Turning away from the lighted window, she tottered towards the door. Coming under the stone portico she looked up, and read on the lamp above her these words :

'ENGLISH HOME.'

Beneath was written on a scroll of glass,

'Rest for the weary.'

Like an outcast spirit creeping to the

heavenly portal and pausing faint and overpowered, Marjorie stood and hesitated, but not for long. At the side of the door was an iron bell-pull, communicating with a large bell. With a murmured prayer that God might at last afford her succour and an asylum, she reached out her hand and rang.

The bell rang loudly, with deep reverberations, and Marjorie was startled by the sound. Almost instantly the door swung open, and the elderly female dressed as a servant appeared upon the threshold.

The light from within fell full upon the wanderer, who stood trembling and clutching her tender burthen.

'Who is there?' said the woman in English, peering out into the darkness. 'What do you want?'

The sound of the English tongue went with a thrill of joy to Marjorie's heart. She uttered a low, appealing cry, tottered across the threshold, and then, utterly spent and wearied out, sobbed hysterically, and sank swooning upon the threshold.

When she recovered she was sitting before the fire in the room which she had inspected from without. She looked wildly around her. The two outcast women sat near her, gazing at her in wonder ; close by sat the elderly servant, with little Léon, pale as death, stretched upon her knee, and bending above her, pressing a glass of wine to her lips, was the lady of the Refuge.

She stretched out her arms wildly, and gave vent to a low, appealing moan. Then her head went round again, and she once more sank into a lifeless swoon.

CHAPTER XXXV.

RESCUED.

When Marjorie again opened her eyes she was lying in a strange bed, and the lady with the pale, grave face was still bending above her.

'Where am I?' she cried, starting up; and then she looked around for her child.

A cold hand was placed upon her feverishly burning forehead, and she was gently laid back upon her pillow.

'The child is quite safe,' said a low

sweet voice. 'We have put him in a cot, and he is sleeping; try to sleep too, and when you waken you will be stronger, and you shall have the little boy.'

Marjorie closed her eyes and moaned, and soon fell into a heavy, feverish sleep.

Having seized her system, the fever kept its burning hold, and for many days the mistress of the house thought that Marjorie would die; but fortunately her constitution was strong; she passed through the ordeal, and one day she opened her eyes on what seemed to her a new world.

For a time she lay quietly looking about her, without a movement and without a word. The room in which she lay was small, but prettily fitted up. There were crucifixes on the wall, and dimity curtains to the bed and the windows; through the

diamond panes the sun was faintly shining; a cosy fire filled the grate; on the hearth sat a woman, evidently a nurse; while on the hearthrug was little Léon, quiet as a mouse, and with his lap full of toys.

It was so dreamy and so peaceful that she could just hear the murmur of life outside, and the faint crackling of the fire on the hearth—that was all.

She lay for a time watching the two figures as in a vision; then the memory of all that had passed came back upon her, and she sobbed. In a moment the woman rose and came over to her, while little Léon ran to the bedside, and took her thin, white hand.

'Mamma,' he said, 'don't cry!'

For in spite of herself Marjorie felt the tears coursing down her cheeks. The

nurse said nothing. She smoothed back the hair from her forehead, and quietly waited until the invalid's grief had passed away.

Then she said gently :

'Do not grieve, madame. The worst of your illness is over. You will soon be well.'

'Have I been very ill?' asked Marjorie faintly.

'Yes, very ill. We thought that you would die.'

'And you have nursed me—you have saved me? Oh, you are very good! Who —who are you—where am I?'

'You are amongst friends. This house is the home of everyone who needs a home. It belongs to Miss Esther Dove. It was she who found you fainting on our

doorstep, and took you in. When you fell into a fever she gave you into my charge. I am one of the nurses.'

She added quietly :

'There, do not ask me more questions now, for you are weak, and must be very careful. Take this, and then, if you will promise to soothe yourself, the little boy shall stay beside you while you sleep.'

Marjorie took the food that was offered to her and gave the promise required. Indeed, she felt too weak to talk.

The nurse, having lifted little Léon into the bed, returned to her chair beside the fire, while Marjorie put her arm around the little fellow's shoulders and presently fell asleep.

Now that the fever had actually passed away, Marjorie's convalescence was rapid.

She still kept to her bed, being too weak even to move without assistance, and during the day little Léon was constantly with her. She asked a few questions, and the more she heard the more her curiosity was aroused.

One day she inquired for the grave lady whose face she dimly remembered to have seen, and who she now heard was the mistress of the house. In the afternoon the lady came to the bedside.

Marjorie was sitting up in bed that day, propped up by pillows, looking the very ghost of what she once had been; while on the bed beside her was little Léon, surrounded by his toys. He looked up, laughed, and clapped his hands when Miss Dove came in, but she only smiled and gently rebuked him for his boisterousness.

Then she sat down beside the bed and took Marjorie's hand.

'Well, my child,' she said, 'so you are rapidly getting well.'

For a moment Marjorie was silent—she could not speak. The tears were blinding her eyes and choking her voice, but she bent her head and kissed the hand that had saved her.

'Come, come,' said Miss Dove; 'you must not give way like this. You have to tell me all about yourself, for at present I know absolutely nothing.'

With an effort, Marjorie conquered her emotion and dried her tears. But what had she to tell—nothing, it seemed, except that she was friendless and alone.

'Nay,' said the lady gently. 'You are not that; from the moment you entered

this door you had friends. But tell me, my child, how was it I found you and your child starving upon my threshold? You have a husband, perhaps? Is he alive or dead?'

Marjorie shook her head.

'He is here in Paris, madame.'

'And his name is Caussidière, is it not? So Léon has told me.'

'Yes, madame, Monsieur Caussidière.'

'We must seek him out,' continued Miss Dove. 'Such conduct is not to be endured. A man has no right to bring his wife to a foreign country and then desert her.'

'Ah, no,' cried Marjorie; 'you must not do that! I will leave the house whenever you wish, madame, but do not force me to see *him* again.'

Miss Dove looked at her for a moment in

silence ; then she rang for the nurse, lifted Léon from the bed, and sent him away.

'Now, my child,' she said, when the two women were alone, 'tell me your story.'

And Marjorie told it, or as much of it as she could recall. She told of her early life in the quaint old manse in Annandale with Mr. Lorraine, Solomon and Mysie ; of Miss Hetherington, and of the Frenchman who came with his specious tongue and wooed her away. Then she told of her life in Paris, of her gradual estrangement from all her friends, and finally of her desertion by the man whom until then she had believed to be her husband.

'So,' said the lady, when she had finished, 'you were married by the English law, and the man is in reality not your husband. Well, the only thing we can do is to leave

him alone altogether, 'and apply to your friends.'

Marjorie shook her head.

'That is useless, madame,' she said. 'When my little boy had nought but starvation before him, I wrote to my mother in Annandale, but she did not answer me.'

'Is that so ?'

'Yes, madame, it is true.'

'It is very strange,' she said, 'but we must see what can be done, Marjorie—may I call you Marjorie ? In the meantime you must not think of all these sad things. You must amuse yourself with Léon, and get well quickly, and my task will be the lighter.'

After this interview Miss Dove visited Marjorie every day, and sometimes sat for an hour or more by her bedside ; and when

at length the invalid, who gained strength every day, was able to rise from her bed, she lay upon a couch by the window, and watched the sunshine creeping into the streets. The more she saw of Miss Dove, the more interested she grew, until at length she was induced to question her nurse as to the antecedents of her protectress.

But all the nurse knew was that Miss Dove was a lady who, having passed through great trouble, determined to spend the rest of her life in doing good. She was possessed of a very large fortune, the whole, or nearly the whole, of which she spent in works of charity. She had founded several homes for destitute women, and between them her days were spent. She was an accomplished nurse, and had on several occasions voluntarily gone to the seat of

war, not only to spend her money upon the wounded soldiers, but to pass through the drudgery of nursing them with her own hands.

One or two cases similar in character to that of Marjorie having reached her, she founded a home—the very home in which Marjorie was now lying—for destitute and friendless Englishwomen in Paris. As Marjorie learned all this, she could not but thank God who had guided her footsteps to that threshold. It had not only saved her life, but that of her child.

It was not like Marjorie to remain idle when there was so much to be done, and as her weakness passed away her brain began to work, planning for the future. She had several schemes made when she spoke of them one night to Miss Dove.

The lady listened quietly, then she said :

'You would rather remain in Paris, Marjorie, than go home ?'

'Madame, I have no home.'

'You have Annandale Castle.'

She shook her head.

'Indeed, it is not my home now! wrote, and there was no answer.'

'But suppose you heard that that was all a mistake ; suppose you learned that your dear mother was ready to open her arms to receive you, what would you say then, my child ?'

Marjorie did not reply. If the truth must be told, her troubled heart found little comfort in the thought of a meeting with Miss Hetherington. Despite the encouraging letters that had passed between them, she still pictured her mother as stern, strange,

and forbidding, the mistress of Annandale Castle, whose tongue was like a sharp-edged sword, and whose ways were full of bitterness and violence. Since she had learned the secret of her birth, she had often thought it all over, and always with renewed pain and a certain fear.

At last, after a long reflection, she spoke:

'I know my mother—she is my mother—is very good; but it has all been a fatality since I was born, and I can hardly realize yet that we are so close akin. Ah! if I had but known, madame! If she had but told me at the first! I should never have left Scotland, or known so much sorrow!'

Miss Dove sighed in sympathetic acquiescence.

'It is a sad story,' she replied. 'Your mother, proud lady as she is, has been a great sinner; but she has been terribly punished. Surely, my child, you do not bear any anger against her in your heart?'

'None, madame; but she is so strange and proud. I am almost afraid of her still.'

'And you have other loving friends,' continued the lady, smiling kindly. 'Do you remember Mr. Sutherland?'

'Johnnie Sutherland?' cried Marjorie joyfully. 'Who told you of *him?*'

'Himself. He is back here in Paris.'

Marjorie uttered a cry of delight.

'You have seen him? You have spoken to him? He knows——'

"He knows everything, my child; and he is waiting below till I give him the

signal to come up. Can you bear to see him?'

There was no need to ask that question; Marjorie's flushed cheek and sparkling eye had answered it long before. Miss Dove stole quietly from the room, and almost immediately reappeared, followed by Sutherland himself.

'Marjorie! my poor Marjorie!' he cried, seizing her hands and almost sobbing.

But who was this that Marjorie saw approaching, through the mist of her own joyful tears? A stooping figure, leaning upon a staff, turning towards her a haggard face, and stretching out a trembling palsied hand! It was Miss Hetherington, trembling and weeping, all the harsh lineaments softened with the yearning of a mother's love.

'My bairn! my bairn!'

'Oh, mother! mother!' cried Marjorie; and mother and daughter clung together, reunited in a passionate embrace.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOME AGAIN.

They took her home with her little boy to Annandale, and there in the old Castle Marjorie soon recovered health and strength.

It was winter still; the landscape was white with snow, the trees hung heavily under their icy load, and a blue mask of ice covered the flowing Annan from bank to bank; but to Marjorie all was gladsome and familiar as she moved about from scene to scene.

She wore black, like a widow, and so did little Léon; and, indeed, it was a common report everywhere that her husband was dead and that she was left alone.

As to Miss Hetherington's secret, all the world knew it now, for the swift tongue of scandal had been busy long before Marjorie's return. Heedless of the shame, heedless of all things in the world save her joy in the possession of her daughter, the grand old lady remained in deep seclusion in her lonely ancestral home.

The time of alienation and misunderstanding was long over. Bit by bit, detail by detail, in the confidence of those days, Miss Hetherington told the story of her life, and Marjorie, seeing it only in the light of her own sorrow, sympathized with

her mother to the full. They never spoke of Caussidière; Marjorie knew now that the man had never really won her love, and the time of her sojourn in France was a dark chapter on which she did not care to look.

In these sad yet happy days, who could be gentler than Miss Hetherington? The mask of her pride fell off for ever, and showed a mother's loving face, sweetened with humility and heavenly pity. She was worn and feeble, and looked very old; but whenever Marjorie was near, she was happiness itself.

The fullest measure of her love, however, was reserved for Marjorie's child. Little Léon had no fear of her, and soon, in his pretty broken English, learned to call her 'grandmamma.'

'We began wi' a bar sinister,' said the lady one day as they sat together; 'but there's no blame and no shame, Marjorie, on you and yours. Your son is the heir of Annandale.'

'Oh, mother,' cried Marjorie sadly, 'how can that be? I am a mother, but no wife!'

'You're wife to yon Frenchman,' answered Miss Hetherington; 'ay, his lawful wedded wife by the English and the Scottish law. Out there in France he might reject you by the law of man; but here in Scotland you're his true wife still, though I wish, with all my heart, you were his widow instead.'

'Is that so, mother?'

'True as gospel, Marjorie. It's wi' *me* the shame lies, like the bright speck of

blood on the hands o' the Thane's wife, which even the perfumes of Araby couldna cleanse awa' !'

'Don't talk of that, mother !' cried Marjorie, embracing the old lady. 'I am sure you are not to blame.'

'And you can forgive me, my bonnie bairn ?'

'I have nothing to forgive ; you were deceived as—as I have been. Oh mother, men are wicked !—I think they have evil hearts.'

The old lady looked long and fondly in her daughter's face ; then she said, with a loving smile :

'I ken one man that has the heart of a king—ay, of an angel, Marjorie.'

'Who, mother ?'

'Who but Johnnie Sutherland ? my

blessings on the lad! But for him, I should have lost my bairn for ever, and it was for his sake, Marjorie, that I wished ye were a widow indeed!'

Marjorie flushed a deep crimson, and turned her head away. Sutherland's unswerving devotion had not failed to touch her deeply, and she understood it now in all its passionate depth and strength; but she still felt herself under the shadow of her old sorrow, and she knew that the tie which bound her to Caussidière could only be broken by death.

* * * * *

That very afternoon, as Marjorie was wandering in the Castle grounds, Sutherland appeared. The memory of what Miss Hetherington had said was still fresh in

Marjorie's mind, and she met her old lover with a certain sad constraint.

'How is your father?' she asked gently.

'Much better. If the spring would only come, I think he would be quite well. But I wanted to speak to you about old Solomon, your foster-father. He has been stranger than ever the last few days, and has asked constantly for you.'

Solomon was dwelling quite alone in a small cottage close to the manse. He still fulfilled, but almost nominally, the duties of sexton, but he was far too old and deaf for the office of precentor, which had been given recently to a younger man. Since her return Marjorie had called on him repeatedly, but had found his manner curiously strange. His wits wandered a good deal: he talked of his old master as if

he still lived, and of Marjorie as if she were still a child.

'I will go over to him now,' said Marjorie; 'I am afraid he is fretting, Johnnie.'

'He is very old, you see,' said Sutherland; 'but I think you are right—the appointment of the new precentor has troubled his mind. Poor old Solomon! Why, he was an old man even when I was a child, and I don't think he can last much longer.'

They passed out of the Castle grounds, and took the path which led across the fields. A keen frost filled the air, snow covered every field and fallow, and the path beneath their feet seemed like iron; far away over the landscape the wintry sun was hanging like a purple globe, small as a schoolboy's pink balloon. There was a

strange hush in the air, a wintry stillness, but to Marjorie's eyes the whole scene was beautiful, full of peace and rest.

They left the footpath and came to the highway. A little further on they halted on the old familiar bridge, and looked down on the waters of the Annan creeping underneath their covering of thick ice.

'Times are changed, Marjorie, since we last stood here,' said Sutherland softly. 'Do you mind that day?'

'Yes,' answered Marjorie, without lifting her eyes to his.

They wandered on towards the village, and presently reached the cottage where the old sexton was dwelling. They found Solomon seated alone by the fireside, looking white and skeletonian. He looked up with lacklustre eyes as they entered.

Marjorie put her arms around his neck, and kissed him on the cheek.

'Wha's this?' he muttered vacantly.

'It is Marjorie—Marjorie Annan.'

'Is it yoursel' ? You should be awa' at the school. Wha's this wi' ye, Marjorie?'

Sutherland put his hand gently on the old man's shoulder.

'Don't you know me, Solomon?'

'What's your name, laddie?'

'John Sutherland.'

Solomon muttered to himself, then said:

'I ken your faither—he's a decent man. Will ye let him speak for me till the meenister, till Mr. Lorraine?'

'Mr. Lorraine?' echoed Marjorie, her eyes full of tears; 'oh, Solomon, Mr. Lorraine is dead and in his grave.'

'Sae he is,' responded the sexton at once.

'Wha should ken better than me, that laid him in the mools? He was a good man and a grand preacher; I was his servant for thretty years, and noo they've putten me awa' and tae'n a seely clishmaclaver in my place.'

'Never mind, Solomon,' said Marjorie soothingly; 'when you are better——'

'Better? I'll ne'er be better!' cried Solomon, with something of his old stubbornness and pertinacity. 'I'm auld, lassie; auld and weak. They're telling me there's a place for me at the meenister's feet—I was his servant thretty years, and I couldna thole to be far awa'. Marjorie! Are ye Marjorie Annan?'

'Yes, Solomon.'

'I mind ye weel,' muttered Solomon; but indeed he scarcely seemed to know her,

all his thoughts and perceptions being mingled in a kind of dream.

So they left him, promising to return soon again. Leaving the cottage, Marjorie strolled instinctively on to the churchyard. Sutherland followed her without a word. They paused at the church gate, and looked over at the old manse. The trees around it had been clipped and trimmed, and the walls were covered with a fresh coat of whitewash. A cry of children at play came from the garden.

Marjorie sighed, and moved on through the churchyard, leaving small footprints in the snow. Presently she paused in the shadow of the church, and stood looking at the spot where the old minister lay at rest. A plain headstone had been placed above the grave.

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF THE

REV. SAMPSON LORRAINE,

Thirty Years Minister of this Parish.'

Then followed the dates of birth and death, and underneath were the simple words,

'Abide with me!'

As Marjorie gazed down and read the inscription, all the sweet past rose before her through a mist of tears. She was a happy child again, standing at the minister's knee: she heard his kind voice, she felt the touch of his loving hand, and his gentle face shone upon her in a pathetic light from heaven.

'Oh, Johnnie!' she sobbed; 'if God could only give me back my foster-father and make me a child again! All I loved

are being taken from me, and now I have no one left in the world but my mother and you!'

'Don't weep, Marjorie!' said Sutherland. 'While I live I shall love you and watch over you. I have loved you from the beginning—I shall love you till I die!'

Tenderly and respectfully he took her hand in his, and she did not draw it away. There was a long silence, broken only by her low sobbing. Then, conquering herself with an effort, and remembering the fatal barrier that stood between them, she released herself from his hold, and said, looking sadly up into his face:

'It is growing late; I must hasten home.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

STRANGE NEWS.

After that tender scene with Marjorie, Sutherland seemed to avoid rather than seek her society. He knew that if he sought it his love would grow, and perhaps become too much for him to bear. If Marjorie had been a free woman, it would have been altogether different, but she was not, nor in the ordinary course of nature was she likely to be.

No, she must live at the Castle—a wife

yet not a wife—with her little boy to console her and remind her of the chain which bound her even while she was free. And as for Sutherland, there was nothing for him but his work—no hope in the future, and only sickening reminiscences of the past—so he stayed at home.

Meantime he worked hard at his pictures, hearing occasionally from his friend, who still occupied the studio in Paris, and who urged Sutherland to return. But this he refused to do. So long as Marjorie remained in Annandale there would he remain also.

What if he seldom saw her, what if all his days were spent in the hardest toil?—could he not walk out when the sun had set, and evening was creeping on, and gaze upon the roof which sheltered her, the scenes where she had lingered day by day? It was poor

comfort perhaps, but it was precious to him.

Thus time passed on, until the dreary desolate winter of that terrible year, so memorable to France and Frenchmen, set in with all its rigour. There was little joy for Sutherland. Indeed, his trials were becoming almost more than he could bear, and he was wondering whether or not, after all, he should leave his home and Marjorie, when there came a piece of news which fairly stunned him.

It came in the shape of a letter and a paper from his Parisian artist friend. The letter, after a few preparatory words, ran as follows :

'You may be shocked, but I hardly think you will be sorry to hear of the death of

your little friend's husband, Léon Caussidière. He disappeared in a most mysterious manner, and is supposed to have been privately put to death. What he was, Heaven knows! but he mixed a good deal in politics, and judging from what you told me about him, I shouldn't be at all surprised to hear that he was a spy. Well, at any rate, whatever he was he is gone—peace be to his soul; and I fancy the world will get on a good deal better without him than with him. At any rate, a certain part of it will, I know! With this I send a paper, that you may read the official account of the death of your friend, and know that there is no mistake about it.'

Having finished the letter, Sutherland turned to the paper—glanced down its

columns; came upon a marked paragraph, and read as follows in the French tongue:

'Caussidière, holding an officer's commission under the Committee of Public Safety, has been convicted of treasonable practices and put to death. He was tried by military tribunal, and executed yesterday.'

Sutherland put down the paper and held his hands to his head: he was like a man dazed. Was he glad? No, he would not allow himself to feel glad—to rejoice in the death of a fellow-creature, even though he was his enemy.

And yet if Caussidière was dead, Marjorie was free. The very thought seemed to turn his brain. He put both the letter and the paper in his pocket, and went up to his room. He could not work, but he sat down among his pictures and tried to think.

What must he do? Go to Marjorie? No, he could not do that—for she would detect the joy in his face and voice, and her sensitive nature would recoil from him, and that he could not bear. He must not see her; other lips than his must tell the news.

He remained all the morning shut up in his room, but in the afternoon he left the house, and walked slowly across the fields towards Annandale Castle.

He knew that at that hour Marjorie would be from home, wandering in the fields, perhaps, with her little boy, or visiting some of her old village friends. Feeling strong in this hope, he hurried on towards the Castle.

He found Miss Hetherington alone. She was glad to see him, but rated him soundly on what she termed his neglect.

'It's not for me to control ye if ye dinna wish to come, Johnnie Sutherland,' she said. 'You're your own maister, and ye can gang your own gait, but it's scarcely fair to Marjorie. She's lonesome, poor lassie, and she takes it ill that ye come so seldom.'

'Miss Hetherington,' returned Sutherland, 'I stayed away not because I wished, but because I took too much pleasure in coming. I love Marjorie. I've loved her ever since I was a lad, and I shall love her till I die. I couldn't come before, knowing she had a husband; but it's for *you* to say now whether I may come in or no.'

'For me? What do you mean, Johnnie Sutherland?'

For answer he put both the letter and paper in her hand, and bade her read. She did read; eagerly at first, but as she pro-

ceeded her hand trembled, the tears streamed from her eyes, and the paper fell from her grasp.

'God forgive me!' she cried; 'it's an evil thing to rejoice at the death of a fellow-creature, yet I canna but rejoice. He broke the heart of my poor bairn, and he tried to crush down me, but, Heaven be praised! we are both free now. Johnnie Sutherland, you say that you love her? Weel, I'm glad. You're a good lad. Comfort her if you can, and may God bless ye both!'

That very night Marjorie learned the news from Miss Hetherington. The old lady told it with a ring of joy in her voice, but Marjorie listened with a shudder. After all, the man was her husband. Despite his cruelty she had once almost loved him; and, though she could not mourn him as a widow should,

she tried to respect the dead. But it was only for a while; then the cloud lifted, and she almost thanked God that she was free.

Sutherland now became a constant visitor at the Castle, and sometimes it seemed to him and to Marjorie also that their early days had returned; the same, yet not the same, for the old Castle looked bright and genial now, and it was, moreover, presided over by a bright genial mistress.

Things could not last thus for ever. Marjorie knew it; and one evening she was awakened from her strange dream.

She had been out during the afternoon with her little boy, and as they were walking back towards the Castle they were joined by Sutherland. For a time the three remained walking together, little Léon clinging on to Sutherland's hand; but after

a while the child ran on to pluck some flowers, and left the two together.

'How he loves you!' said Marjorie, noting the child's backward glance; 'I don't think he will ever forget the ride you gave him on the roundabouts at the Champs d'Elysée—you were very kind to him; you were very kind to us both.'

She paused, but he said nothing; presently she raised her eyes, and she saw that he was looking fixedly at her. She blushed and turned her head aside, but he gained possession of her hand.

'Marjorie,' he said, 'you know why I was kind to you, do you not?—it was because I loved you, Marjorie. I love you *now*—I shall always love you; tell me, will you some day be my wife?'

The word was spoken, either for good or

evil, and he stood like a man awaiting his death sentence. For a time she did not answer; when she turned her face towards him, it was quite calm.

'Have you thought well?' she said. 'I am not what I was. I am almost an old woman now, and there is my boy.'

'Let him be my boy, Marjorie; do not say "No"!'

She turned towards him and put both her hands in his.

'I say "Yes,"' she answered, 'with all my heart, but not yet—not yet!'

Later on that evening, when little Léon lay peacefully sleeping in his cot, and Miss Hetherington was dozing in her easy-chair, Marjorie, creeping from the house, walked in the Castle grounds to think over her new-found happiness alone. Was it all

real, she asked herself, or only a dream? Could it be true that she, after all her troubles would find so much peace? It seemed strange, yet it must be true. Yes, she was free at last.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IS RETROSPECTIVE.

Was Caussidière then departed from this life? To understand the truth, we must change the scene for a short space from the green uplands and heathery mountains of Annandale back to the streets of the French imperial city.

Since the personages of our drama were last seen moving there, what changes have taken place! The Germans, who were then advancing, have come and gone; the

dismal episode of the great siege is over; civil strife and counter strife have supervened; and now the proud city, which the Emperor beautified and prostituted, lies trembling at the feet of the Commune! Revolution upon revolution; change upon change; the spectre of a great national terror, ever shifting its lineaments, followed one horrible experience with another.

The streets were alive with the hungry, cruel faces of women and men; the great houses of the wealthy were closed, their owners flown for safety to more peaceful regions; the Tuileries was in ruins; the fierce, howling mob surged this way and that way like a troubled sea. Men who were beggars yesterday ruled in the high places. No priest dared show his face abroad. It was the epoch of massacre and

civil war; it was the coming triumph of the *pétroleuse.*

Meantime Caussidière was jubilant. He was a great man at last, and high in favour with the leaders of the Commune. He went to and fro proudly, in a curious uniform, composed of a soldier's coat and epaulettes and a civilian's trousers. He was one of the heroes of the hour.

But the stormy stress of civil war and the claims of country did not occupy the whole of our good patriot's time, or fill the complete measure of his aspiring soul. He was a follower of Venus as well as Mars, and as constant as ever in his attendance on Mademoiselle Séraphine, of the Chatelet. Indeed, at the very moment we encounter him again, he is victorious in love, having finally persuaded Séraphine to marry

him by civil contract, according to the laws of France.

It was a very quiet affair, this marriage. One morning Caussidière dressed himself in martial array, fixed a white rosette on the lappet of his coat, and drove in a hired fly, with the patriot Huet at his side, to the office of the arrondissement, where Séraphine was waiting with her friends, The ceremony was soon performed. Waiting on the pavement to see the bridal party emerge was a motley crowd of the unwashed: haggard men, ragged women, and street *gamins.*

'Three cheers for Caussidière!' croaked an old woman, as that worthy emerged with his bride upon his arm.

The mob emitted a feeble cheer. Caussidière, with all his honours upon him, took

off his hat with a patronizing smile and bowed graciously.

At this moment a woman, shabbily dressed, stepped forward and touched the bridegroom on the shoulder.

'Ah, Adèle!' he exclaimed, recognising her at a glance.

Adèle fixed her wild black eyes upon his face, frowning darkly.

'So it has come to this!' she cried. 'You have thrown away the poor foreign girl and her child and taken another wife!'

'What are you talking about? Bah! stand aside!'

But Adèle set her lips firmly and blocked the way.

'You have betrayed her, as you would betray all of us—your country and your friends as well; but I warn you to take

care. The time is near when you will be betrayed in turn, and then——'.

Here Sèraphine, who had been listening impatiently, broke in. She was resplendently attired in white satin, with a charming bonnet fresh from the *modiste*, and with jewels upon her person, gold upon her wrists.

'Who is this creature?' she exclaimed. 'What does she want?'

Adèle turned sharply upon the speaker and eyed her contemptuously from head to foot.

'Who is she?' she echoed in a shrill voice. 'She is Adèle Lambert of the *Mouche d'Or*, and she knows *you* as well as she knows your *lâche* of a lover. You are Séraphine of the Chatelet, who take no pay from the manager, because you sell

yourself for a napoleon to the first who comes. And Caussidière has bought you now to play this farce of a wedding! A fine bridegroom—a fine bride! But the bridegroom is a traitor, and the bride is a ——.'

'Come, come, Adèle!' cried the herculean Huet, interrupting her. 'You've been having a glass too much, and don't know what you're saying.'

Without heeding the interruption, Adèle continued to regard the actress with savage contempt; then, turning suddenly to the crowd and laughing fiercely, she harangued them as follows:

'Look at her, citizens! Look at them both! While you go ragged such people as this must wear fine clothes and jewels; while you starve, while you have not even bread, they eat of the best; while you

have only muddy Seine water to drink, they must drink champagne. Look at the woman in her fine robes; look at the jewels in her breast, the rings on her hands. We all know how she earned them, citizens! When the Germans were here it was such women as these who welcomed them, who became their mistresses and took their gold, while the people were starving and dying! It would be a good deed to tear them limb from limb!'

A low ominous roar, like the growl of a wild beast, showed that this harangue was not without effect. The crowd was increasing, swelled by many passers-by.

'The devil!' muttered Huet. 'Rush on to the carriage!'

But Adèle still blocked the way with increasing fury.

'And if the woman is what I have said, the man is worse. He calls himself a good patriot, but he has betrayed women, and would betray the city. *I* hate him, citizens; I have good reason to hate him. He is no better than his mistress, the *cocotte !*'

Another ominous roar from the crowd, only too glad of an excuse for tumult and violence. Seeing that every moment increased the danger, the wedding party moved towards the carriage, which was waiting at the kerbstone. Flinging his powerful arms round Adèle, Huet held her, while Caussidière assisted Séraphine to her seat; then he sprang after them, and cried to the driver to hurry his horses on.

Freed from his hold, Adèle screamed violently, and, surrounded by the shriek-

ing crowd, rushed at the carriage. But it was too late; the carriage moved away, parting the mob on either side. Then, grown frantic without knowing why, the people groped for stones and hurled them after the bridal party. Some of the women seized up mud and flung it at the occupants of the carriage. Caussidière's beautiful uniform was bespattered, and one large handful of dirt striking Séraphine in the face, completed the pretty lady's terror and caused her to faint away.

Once out of the street they were in safety, for the mob was only half in earnest, and did not attempt to follow far.

A few hours later Caussidière and his bride were seated alone together in the gilded *salon* of a well-furnished 'apartment' which the bridegroom had prepared for his

bride. The table was spread with the *débris* of a first-class dinner, supplied from an adjoining restaurant.

But the fair lady of the Chatelet was in her least amiable mood. The episode after the wedding had completely upset her, and she had been pouting and showing her white teeth ever since, without a smile or a pleasant word for any one, even the bridegroom of her choice.

'My dear Séraphine,' said Caussidière, bending over her and offering to embrace her, 'this is the happiest day of my life!'

'Nonsense,' returned the bride. 'I'm sure it's the most miserable day of mine.'

'Don't say that, *cherie!*'

'I do say it!'

'But you don't mean it!'

'But yes, yes, yes! Go away! Don't touch me—I detest you!'

And she shook herself free from his embrace and threw herself upon a settee on the other side of the room.

Caussidière bit his lip, and tried to force his features into a smile; but his efforts were futile, and the shadow of a forbidding scowl darkened his countenance.

'It is that infernal woman,' he cried. 'A she-devil. But surely you do not mind her in the least?'

'I do mind her!' returned Séraphine, whimpering hysterically. 'To think of such a thing happening on such a day! I was a fool to marry you! The woman was right—you have a wife already.'

'I have no wife, Séraphine!'

'It is the same thing, and you have be-

haved abominably. A pretty mess I have made of it—I, who could have married so well.'

'Bah!' exclaimed Caussidière, losing patience.

'That's right, behave to me as you have behaved to her, brigand. But if you think I am going to live with you, you are mistaken; I would rather die.'

And Séraphine rose impatiently, and moved towards the door.

Caussidière went livid. He, too, was upset by the events of the day, and all his angry passions were aroused. He stood before the door, and blocked the way.

'Let me pass!' cried the actress.

'I shall do nothing of the kind. Sit down!'

'I tell you I will not stay here!'

'But you shall!'

And he took her forcibly but gently by the arms and pushed her into a chair.

'It is too late to show off your fine airs, Madame Caussidière. I have taken you, and I mean to keep you. *Diable!* What are you, to reproach *me?* Do you think I married you with my eyes shut, not knowing what you were? No, Adèle was right; you have taken presents from many men, but now you have sold yourself to me.'

'I tell you I hate you, Caussidière!'

The Frenchman was about to make an angry retort, when there was a tramp of feet on the stairs without, followed by a loud knock at the door.

'Open!' cried a voice; then, without more ado, the door was flung open, and a man in uniform appeared on the threshold.

'Citizen Caussidière.'

'Well?'

'You are wanted at headquarters. Follow me!'

Caussidière started in surprise, for behind the speaker stood two armed men blocking up the lobby.

'I cannot come to-night. *Diable!* do you not know it is my marriage day? I will attend to-morrow.'

'You must accompany me *now*, citizen, otherwise I shall have to arrest you.'

Caussidière recoiled in consternation.

'Arrest me? *Me?* Do you know who I am?'

'That is not my affair, citizen. Will you come quietly, or——'

As he spoke the man advanced threateningly.

'Your authority!' gasped Caussidière.

'My authority is the Commune.'

Seeing that it was useless to resist, Caussidière attempted to put a good face on the affair. Smiling nervously, he turned to Séraphine.

'Do not distress yourself. It is doubtless some affair of importance, in which my services are wanted; and I shall return to you directly. *Au revoir*, my Séraphine.'

He stooped to kiss her, but she turned her head pettishly away. Then, shrugging his shoulders and putting on his hat jauntily, he passed out of the door and down the stairs, escorted by the officer and soldiers. When he had gone, Séraphine sat down for some time, sobbing hysterically. At last she composed herself, rose, and looked in the large mirror which stood

over the mantelpiece. Her pretty face was swollen with weeping, and her fair hair seemed more faded and colourless than ever.

'What a fright I look!' she murmured.

But feeling in her pocket, she found a rouge-box and a powder-box, by the aid of which she soon restored her complexion to its normal beauty. Then she paced eagerly up and down the room, pausing every now and then as if to listen for an approaching footstep.

'Shall I wait till he returns? or shall I go?'

She walked to the table, poured herself out a glass of champagne, and drank it off. The draught seemed to give her new life and decision.

'After all, all has happened for the best!

I should never have remained with him long.'

So saying, she put on her bonnet and cloak and drew on her gloves. Then a thought seemed to strike her. She ran into the adjoining bedroom and opened the drawers one by one. There was little to reward her search till she came to one drawer which was locked. With a wrench she forced it open.

She uttered a cry of delight.

Within it were bank-notes and a number of gold pieces, together with some loose memoranda and letters. She gathered up all together and thrust them into a small handbag which she carried.

'After all, he is my husband,' she cried with a wicked laugh; 'and to take from one's husband is no robbery.'

A few minutes later she stealthily left the apartments, crept down the stairs, and out into the silent streets.

The bridal night passed slowly away. The wax lights on the wedding table slowly consumed themselves, the rooms remained silent and tenantless, and when the faint light of dawn crept in through the muslin curtains covering the window pane, the bride was soundly reposing in a distant part of the city, and the bridegroom had not returned.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A DISMAL EXPERIENCE.

WHILE the lights were burning out in the empty marriage-chamber, Caussidière was pacing impatiently up and down a dismal chamber, or guard-room, attached to the headquarters of the Commune. On leaving his lodgings with his military escort he had been conducted thither, and then, with little or no ceremony, left alone, with the abrupt intimation that he would presently be summoned before the authorities.

From every side—from without the door, from beneath the iron-barred window, from the stone quadrangles beyond—came the measured tramp of sentinels, and from time to time the cry of voices, the clang of arms. Save for these sounds the place was quite silent. An oil lamp hung from the ceiling of the room, emitting a gloomy light. Nothing could have been more cheerless, more disgusting, than the place and its surroundings.

A pleasant experience, truly, for a man upon his wedding night! The bridegroom cursed his stars till he was tired of cursing; then threw himself on a bench and gloomily cogitated. His eye kindled, and his whole frame trembled with impatience, as he thought of Séraphine. He was eager to return to her, to embrace her, to coax away

her ill-humour. *Diable!* To have the cup snatched from his grasp, just as he was about to take so full a draught of happiness, was simply maddening.

Hours passed thus. At last the door opened, and the same officer who had arrested him appeared and beckoned.

'Come this way,' he said.

Caussidière rose, stretched himself with assumed *sang froid*, and obeyed.

Preceded by his captor, and followed by two soldiers, he walked along through a labyrinth of dull passages, till he came to an open door.

The officer knocked respectfully.

'Come in,' said a voice.

The door opened, and Caussidière found himself in a large chamber, where several men in nondescript costumes—some quasi-

military, others civilian—sat at a long table, with papers before them. At either end of the table stood an armed soldier.

The leading figure of the group was a fierce-looking little man, with a bald head and large dyed moustache of purple blackness. He wore a military frock coat, and on the table before him was a cocked hat and a sword in its scabbard, lying as if just cast there by the owner's hand.

'Citizen Caussidière,' said this worthy, fixing his bloodshot black eyes on the prisoner.

'That is I,' cried Caussidière. 'As a faithful servant and officer of the Commune, I demand to know why I am under arrest.'

'Stand forward,' was the sharp reply, 'and hold your tongue.'

There was a pause. The little man turned over the papers before him, and then conversed in whispers with his colleagues. At last he spoke again:

'You say you are a faithful servant, Citizen Caussidière?'

Caussidière bowed.

'Nevertheless, it is reported to us that you are in communication with the enemies of the Commune, that you have supplied them with information of our strength and position, and that for these services you have received certain sums of money—that, in one word, you are a spy.'

Caussidière started and turned white as death; then, recovering his self-control with a mighty effort, he cried:

'It is false! It is infamously false!—Citizen, on my life——'

'Silence,' cried the little man, holding up his hand.

'I cannot be silent, citizen. I demand justice. I have been dragged here like a criminal on the very night of my marriage; I have left my bride weeping, wondering, and in despair; and all, believe me, to answer some preposterous charge which I can dispel with a breath. Let me go to-night, in God's name. To-morrow I will report myself, and answer what questions you choose.'

The men at the table whispered together again; then the spokesman proceeded.

'It is impossible. The charge against you is too grave. If what you say is true, so much the better for you, citizen; but unfortunately the proofs are forthcoming, and are black against you. You know the

penalty of treason? If we discover that you are guilty, you will go to join the majority within twenty-four hours.'

'But I am not guilty,' gasped Caussidière. 'I demand your proofs. Who is my accuser?'

The leader made a sign with his head, and the next moment Caussidière found himself confronted with Adèle.

'That woman! That infamous one! Citizens, you will never listen to such a creature.'

'On the contrary, we have already listened. Citizeness, is this the man?'

'Yes,' answered Adèle, in a loud voice.

'You accuse him of communicating with the leaders at Versailles?'

'Yes.'

'You have watched him, and you have

seen him while on military duty at the barrier send secret messages by the spies of the enemy?'

'Yes.'

'It is a lie,' cried Caussidière. 'This woman is my enemy; she would swear anything to cause my destruction.'

'I have sworn the truth,' said Adèle firmly, 'and I am ready to stand by it.' And she added in a low voice, so that only the prisoner would hear: 'I told you that the poor English lady and the child should be avenged, and—you see!'

'Caussidière,' said the little man sternly.

'Yes, citizen.'

'Look at that pocket-book. Is it yours?'

Trembling violently, Caussidière took the book, and turned over the leaves. The

sweat stood in beaded drops upon his brow, and he seemed about to fall.

'Yes!—no!' he murmured. 'I cannot tell.'

The members of the tribunal looked significantly at each other.

'Perhaps you know your own handwriting,' said the leader with a dark smile. 'Do you identify it? or do you deny it?'

Caussidière tried in vain to speak; his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he gazed round in despair, like a beast at bay.

'That pocket-book contains memoranda of our secret movements, our numbers, our military arrangements. It contains also plans of our military divisions and sketches of our fortifications. It is for you to show

with what object you kept such a record, and for what purpose it has been used.'

'I can explain, citizen; I can explain!'

'You will have an opportunity of doing so later on; in the meantime, is it, or is it not, your handwriting?'

'I cannot tell! It may be a forgery, for all I know!'

A murmur ran along the table. The leader smiled again more sardonically.

'You must be aware, citizen, whether or not you ever possessed such a pocket-book. Be good enough not to trouble us with prevarications which will not serve you in any way, and may incense your judges against you. In the meantime you are under arrest. Remove the prisoner!'

The officer stepped forward and touched him on the shoulder. Simultaneously the

leader handed the officer a paper on which he had been hastily writing.

Caussidière staggered forward to the table.

'Listen to me, I beseech you!' he cried. 'I am innocent!'

'That remains to be seen. Remove him!'

'Where am I to be taken?'

'To prison, Caussidière; to-morrow you will receive your sentence.'

Caussidière would have continued his appeal, but the soldier, stepping forward, drew him unceremoniously to the door. As he passed by Adèle, she bent towards him with a look of malignant delight, and whispered:

'*Au revoir*, Caussidière! I congratulate you on the beginning of your honeymoon.'

Then, before he could answer or hear another word, the prisoner was uncere-

moniously hurried away. Half an hour later he was cooling his heels in a prison cell, where he was left in almost total darkness; and at the very moment when Séraphine had placed his money and jewels under her pillow and gone comfortably to sleep, he was hiding his face in his hands and moaning in mad despair.

CHAPTER XL.

RESURGAM.

After the confession of her love for Sutherland, and the promise his love had wrung from her trembling lips, Marjorie was not a little troubled.

Again and again she reproached herself for want of fidelity to Caussidière's memory, for she was tender-hearted, and could not readily forget what the man had once been to her. Infinite is the capacity for forgiveness implanted in the heart of a loving

woman, and now that Caussidière had gone to his last account, a deep and sacred pity took possession of his victim's heart.

Sutherland saw the signs of change with some anxiety, but had sufficient wisdom to wait until time should complete its work and efface the Frenchman's memory for ever from Marjorie's mind. When they met he spoke little to her of love, or of the tender hope which bound them together; his talk was rather of the old childish days, when they were all in all to one another; of old friends and old recollections, such as sweeten life. He was very gentle and respectful to her; only showing in his eyes the constancy of his tender devotion, never harshly expressing it in passionate words.

But if Sutherland was patient and self-contained, it was far different with the im-

pulsive lady of the Castle. No sooner was she made aware of the true state of affairs than she was anxious that the marriage should take place at once.

'I'm an old woman now, Marjorie,' she cried, 'and the days o' my life are numbered. Before I gang awa' let me see you a happy bride—let me be sure you have a friend and protector while I'm asleep among the mools.'

She was sitting in her boudoir in her great arm-chair, looking haggard and old indeed. The fire in her black eyes had faded away, giving place to a dreamy and wistful pity; but now and again, as on the present occasion, it flashed up like the gleam upon the blackening brand.

Marjorie, who was seated sewing by her mother's side, sadly shook her head.

'I cannot think of it yet,' she replied. 'I feel it would be sacrilege.'

'Sacrilege, say you?' returned Miss Hetherington. 'The sacrilege was wi' yon Frenchman, when he beguiled you awa', and poisoned your young life, my bairn. You owed him no duty living, and you owe him none dead. He was an ill limmer, and thank God he's in his grave.'

'Ah, do not speak ill of him now. If he has sinned he has been punished. To die —so young.'

And Marjorie's gentle eyes filled with tears.

'If he wasna ripe, do you think he would be gathered?' exclaimed Miss Hetherington, with something of her old fierceness of manner. 'My certie, he was ripe—and rotten; Lord forgie me for miscalling the

dead! But Marjorie, my bairn, you're o'er tender-hearted. Forget the past! Forget everything but the happy future that lies before you! Think you're just a young lass marrying for the first time, and marrying as good a lad as ever wore shoon north o' the Tweed.'

Marjorie rose from her seat, and walking to the window, looked dreamily down at the Castle garden, still tangled as a maze and overgrown with weeds. As she did so, she heard a child's voice, calling in French :

'*Maman! maman!*'

It was little Léon, playing in the old garden, attended by a Scottish serving-maid, who had been taken on as nurse. He saw Marjorie looking down, and looking up with a face bright as sunshine, waved his hands to her in delight.

How can I think as you say,' she said, glancing round at her mother, 'when I have my boy to remind me every day that I am a widow? After all, he is my husband's child—a gift that makes amends for all my sorrow.'

As she spoke she kissed her hand fondly to the child, and looked down at him through streaming tears of love.

'Weel, weel,' said the old lady soothingly; 'I'm no saying but that it's weel to forget and forgi'e. Only your life must not be wasted, Marjorie! I must see you settled down before I gang.'

'You will not leave me, dear mother!' answered Marjorie, returning to her side and bending over her. 'No, no; you are well and strong.'

'What's that the auld sang says?' re-

turned Miss Hetherington, smoothing the girl's hair with her wrinkled hand, as she repeated thoughtfully:

> ' "I hear a voice you cannot hear,
> That says I must not stay;
> I see a hand you cannot see,
> That beckons me away!"

That's it, Marjorie! I'm an old woman now—old before my time. God has been kind to me, far kinder than I deserve; but the grass will soon be green on my grave in the kirkyard. Let me sleep in peace! Marry Johnnie Sutherland wi' my blessing, and I shall ken you will never want a friend.'

Such tender reasoning had its weight with Marjorie, but it failed to conquer her scruples altogether. She still remained in the shadow of her former sorrow, fearful and ashamed to pass, as she could have done

at one step, into the full sunshine of the newer and brighter life.

So the days passed on, till at last there occurred an event so strange, so unexpected, and spirit-compelling, that it threatened for a time to drive our heroine into madness and despair.

One summer afternoon, Marjorie, accompanied by little Léon, met Sutherland in the village, and walked with him to Solomon's cottage. They found the old man in the garden, looking unusually bright and hale; but his talk was still confused: he mingled the present with the past, and continued to speak of Marjorie, and to address her, as if she were still a child.

The sun was setting when they left him, turning their steps towards Annandale Castle. They lingered slowly along the

road, talking of indifferent things, and sweetly happy in each other's society, till it was growing dark.

Then Marjorie held out her hand.

'Let me go with you to the Castle gate,' said Sutherland eagerly.

'Not to-night,' answered Marjorie. 'Pray let me walk alone, with only little Léon.'

Very unwillingly he acquiesced, and suffered her to depart. He watched her sadly till her figure disappeared in the darkness, moving towards the lonely bridge across the Annan.

Having wished Sutherland good-night, Marjorie took the child by the hand and walked back across the meadows towards the Castle. It was a peaceful gloaming; the stars were shining brightly, the air was

balmy; so she sauntered along, thinking dreamily of the past.

She walked up by the bridge, and looked down at Annan Water, flowing peacefully onward.

As she looked she mused. Her life had begun with trouble, but surely all that was over now. Her days in Paris seemed to be fading rapidly into the dimness of the past; there was a broken link in her chain of experience, that was all. Yes, she would forget it, and remember only the days which she had passed at Annandale.

And yet, how could she do so? There was the child, little Léon, who looked at her with his father's eyes, and spoke his childish prattle in tones so like those of the dead man, that they sometimes made her shudder. She lifted the boy in her arms.

'Léon,' she said; 'do you remember Paris, my child—do you remember your father?'

The child looked at her, and half shrank back in fear. How changed she had become! Her cheeks were burning feverishly, her eyes sparkling.

'Mamma,' said the boy, half drawing from her; 'what is the matter?'

'Nothing, darling,' she said.

She pressed him fondly to her, and set him again upon the ground. They walked on a few steps further, when she paused again, sat down upon the grass, and took the boy upon her knee.

'Léon,' she said, patting his cheek, and smoothing back his hair. 'You love Annandale, do you not?'

'Yes, mamma, and grandmamma, and Mr. Sutherland.'

'And—and you would be able to forget the dreadful time we spent in Paris?'

'And papa?'

'My darling, your father is dead!'

She pressed the child to her again; raised her eyes, and looked straight into the face of her husband.

Caussidière!

It was indeed he, or his spirit, standing there in the starlight, with his pale face turned towards her, his eyes looking straight into hers. For a moment they looked upon one another—he made a movement towards her, when, with a wild cry, Marjorie clasped her child still more closely to her, and sank back swooning upon the ground.

When she recovered her senses she was still lying where she had fallen; the child

was kneeling beside her, crying bitterly, and Caussidière, the man, and not his spirit, was bending above her. When she opened her eyes, he smiled, and took her hand.

'It is I, little one,' he said. 'Do not be afraid!'

With a shudder she withdrew her hand, and rose to her feet and faced him.

'*You!*' she exclaimed; 'I thought you were dead!'

Caussidière shrugged his shoulders.

'Truly,' he said; 'and you rejoice to find that I still live; is it not so, Marjorie?'

She did not answer him; her very blood seemed to be freezing in her veins, and her face wore such an expression of horror, that for a moment even he was rendered dumb. Poor Marjorie seemed to be looking again upon black despair. Where was all her

dream of happiness now? Gone, all gone with the re-appearance of *his* face.

'Marjorie,' he said, 'let me hear your words of welcome? I am an exile now, driven to seek refuge in Scotland, to escape the bullets of my foes.'

'Why—why have you come to me?'

'I have come to you for comfort. I have come to take you with me to share my English home!'

'To share your home!' echoed Marjorie. 'I will not—no, never. You have done me evil enough already—but I am free. I know you now, and I will not go with you!'

For a moment this firm revolt nonplussed him, but he had the trump card in his own hand; therefore he could afford to smile.

'You are free!' he said. 'What do you mean by that, *mon amie?*'

'I mean,' said Marjorie, 'that you are nothing to me. You have said so, and I know it, and I wish never to see your face again.'

'Possibly, but our wishes are not always gratified. I am sorry you cannot give me a better welcome, since you will see me not once, but many times; as to being free, that is all nonsense. We are in Scotland now, remember; and you—why, you are my wife.'

'Your wife!'

'Yes, my wife!—and now, *chérie*—although I could use force if I chose, I have no wish to do so. I ask you merely to fulfil your duty and come with me to my home.'

For a moment Marjorie gave no answer; what could she say or do? No need for him to tell her she was in his power, she knew it only too well. While in France he had the power of turning her from his door, and heaping ignominy not only upon herself but upon her child, in her own country his power was absolute over them both.

With a wild cry she threw up her hands and cried on God for help and comfort, but no answer came; it seemed that for her there was no help in all the world.

CHAPTER XLI.

FATHER AND CHILD.

'*Chérie*, am I forgiven?' said Caussidière, again holding forth his hands.

The sound of his voice recalled her to herself. She shrank away from him in positive terror.

'Keep back,' she cried; 'don't touch me.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that I hate and fear you! Wife or no wife, I will never live with you again—never, never!'

Confident of his own power, Caussidière never winced. He had expected something of this kind, and was not wholly unprepared for it. He said nothing, but quietly watching his opportunity, he lifted the child in his arms. Finding himself thus suddenly and roughly seized from his mother's side, Léon screamed wildly, but Caussidière shook him, and bade him be at peace.

'That is what your mother has taught you, to scream at the sight of your father. Now *I* will teach you otherwise.'

He held the child firmly in his arms, and it was well for him that he did so, for Marjorie sprang forward and seized him.

'Give him to me,' she cried; 'give me my child!'

'*Your* child,' returned Caussidière with a

sneer; 'the child is mine. I have a right to take him, and to keep him too, and that is what I mean to do!'

'To keep him!' cried Marjorie; 'you would never do that; you do not want him if you do not care for him; and he is all I have in the world.'

'But I mean to keep him all the same!'

'You shall not; you dare not; you shall kill me before you take my boy. Léon, my darling, come to me; come to your mother!'

She stretched forth her arms to take the child, when Caussidière, livid with passion, raised his hand and struck her in the face. She staggered back, then with a cry she fell senseless to the ground.

When she opened her eyes it was quite

dark all about her, and as quiet as the grave.

'Léon,' she moaned feebly, but no answer came.

She sat up, pressing her hands tightly upon her head, for she was still stupid from the blow, and hardly seemed to realize what had taken place. She felt faint and sick, and when she rose to her feet she was so weak she could hardly stand.

Gradually the dizziness passed away; she remembered all that had occurred, and with a low moan she sank again upon the ground, crying bitterly.

But soon her sobs abated, and impatiently brushing away her tears, she set herself to wonder again what she must do. On one thing she was determined, to be with

her child. Yes; at any cost they must be together.

For herself she had little to fear. What further harm could possibly happen to her? He had dragged her down. He had made her pass through every kind of humiliation it was possible for a woman to endure. No, she could not shake off the degraded shame which oppressed her; but she could save her child. Little Léon, whom she had nursed so tenderly, and kept ignorant of every sin, to be so cruelly torn from her! Heaven help him if he was left to the tender mercies of his father!

She rose to her feet again, and staggered on towards the Castle. Her scalding tears fell fast, her breast was rent with sobs; and for the first time in her life she

began to question the beneficence of the Divine Father, whom she had been taught from her childhood to revere. It seemed to her that her trouble far exceeded her offence. If she had sinned, surely she had suffered, and she might now be permitted to rest in peace.

But for her it seemed there was no peace, and, but for Léon's sake, she would have wished to die.

It was late when she reached the Castle. Miss Hetherington, having grown fearful at her long absence, rushed forward to meet her; then with a cry she shrank away.

'Marjorie,' she exclaimed, 'what's wrong, and—and where's the bairn?'

At the mention of Léon, Marjorie wrung her hands.

'*He* has come back and taken him from me!'

She looked so wild and sad that the old lady thought her reason was going. Her face was white as death, and there was a red mark on her forehead where the man had struck her. Miss Hetherington took her hands and soothed her gently; when she saw that her calmness was returning to her she said:

'Now, Marjorie, my bairn, tell me all about it!'

And Marjorie told, trembling and crying meanwhile, and imploring Miss Hetherington to recover her child.

The old lady listened with apparent self-command, though in reality she was as much disturbed as Marjorie. She felt that the Frenchman's resuscitation and return

meant more than was at that time apparent. Caussidière had always had a set purpose in view, and she knew well that his plans had never included much happiness for her or hers; there was clearly some evil pending: she must think out the best means of meeting him in his own way.

But of all this she said nothing to Marjorie.

'Dinna fret, Marjorie,' she said, patting the girl on the head; 'there's nothing to fear. The man's a knave, we ken, but he's a fool as weel. Bring harm to his own bairn, not he!—he's o'er sharp to put himsel' into the power o' the English law! 'Tis the siller he wants, and 'tis the siller he means to get!'

'But what shall we do?' sobbed Marjorie.

'Do?—nothing. Bide quiet a while, and *he*'ll do something, mark *me!*'

'But Léon—what will become of Léon?'

'Dinna greet for the bairn; I tell ye he's safe enough; after all, he's with his father.'

'But he mustn't stop; I must get him back, or it will kill me.'

'You shall have him back, never fear, Marjorie.'

'But to-night—what can be done to-night?'

'Nothing, my lassie — absolutely nothing. Get you to bed and rest you, and to-morrow I'll tell you what we must do.'

After a good deal more persuasion Marjorie was induced to go to her room; but during the whole of that night she never

closed her eyes, but walked about in wild unrest.

When the dawn broke she descended the stairs, and to her amazement found Miss Hetherington in the dining-room, just as she had left her on the preceding night. The weary hours of vigil had done their work; her face, always white, was positively corpse-like; her thin grey hairs were dishevelled, and her eyes were dim. With a piercing cry Marjorie ran forward and fell at her feet.

'Mother!' she cried; 'dear mother, what is the matter?'

The old woman laid her trembling hand upon Marjorie's brown head and smiled.

''Tis nothing, my child,' she said. 'The hours of the night have passed o'er quickly for me, you see, for I sat thinking, and

now you see the dawn has come. . . . Marjorie, my poor Marjorie! I wonder you can ever find it in your heart to call me mother!—see what sorrow has come to you through me.'

'Through you? Oh, no, no!'

'Ay; but 'tis so, Marjorie. "The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation;" through my sin you suffer.'

'Do not say that—it is not true.'

'Ay, but it is true. Through my sin you were made a poor outcast, with no mother to watch over you, no kind hand to guide you. When I think on it, it breaks my heart, Marjorie—it breaks my heart.'

* * * * *

About ten o'clock that morning a messenger came to the Castle bringing a

note for Marjorie. It was from Caussidière, and dated from Dumfries.

'I am here,' he wrōte, 'with the child. Do you propose to join me, as I can force you to do if I choose, or am I to keep the child only? I might be induced to yield him up to you upon certain conditions. Let me know what you mean to do, as my stay here will not be of long duration, and I am making arrangements to take Léon away with me.

'Your *husband*,

'LÉON CAUSSIDIÈRE.'

Marjorie's first impulse was to rush to the place where she knew her child to be; but Miss Hetherington restrained her.

'Bide a wee, Marjorie,' she said; 'we'll get the bairn and not lose *you*.'

She dismissed Caussidière's messenger, and sent her own servant for Sutherland.

When the young man arrived, she saw him alone, told him in a few words what had occurred, and put Caussidière's letter in his hand.

'Bring back the child, Johnnie Sutherland,' she said, 'even if you half kill the father.'

Sutherland took the letter, and, with these instructions ringing in his ears, went to Dumfries to seek Caussidière at the place mentioned. He was like a man demented; the blow had been so sudden that he hardly realized as yet what it all meant: he only knew that he had fallen from the brightest hope to the blackest despair, and that henceforth he must endure a living death. But this was no time to think of himself.

He owed a duty to Marjorie; he must bring her back her child.

The house he sought was a small inn in one of the bye-streets of Dumfries, and Sutherland knew it well. He entered the place, found a shock-headed servant-girl in the passage, and asked for the 'French gentleman who was staying in the house.'

'You'll find him ben yonder,' said the girl, pointing to a door on the ground-floor.

Sutherland beckoned to her to open the door; she did so. He entered the room, and closed the door behind him.

Caussidière leapt to his feet with an oath. Léon, who had been sitting pale and tremulous in a corner, rushed forward with a cry of joy.

But before he could reach Sutherland's

side his father clutched him and drew him back, grasping the child so roughly as to make him moan with pain.

Then, white and furious, Caussidière faced Sutherland.

'So, it is *you!*' he exclaimed. 'How dare you intrude here? Leave this room!'

Sutherland, who had placed his back to the door and put the key in his pocket, made no attempt to move. He was able to keep his self-control, but his face was white as death.

'Monsieur Caussidière,' he said, 'I have come for that child!'

'Really,' said Caussidière, with a sneer; 'then perhaps you will tell me what you propose to offer for him? Madame Caussidière must pay dearly for having made you her messenger.'

'She will pay nothing.'

'What do you mean, monsieur ?'

'What I say. I mean to take that child and give you nothing for him. You have come to the end of your tether, Monsieur Caussidière. You will find this time you haven't got a helpless woman to deal with !'

Caussidière looked at him with a new light in his eyes. What did it mean ? Had the man really power ? and if so, to what extent ? A little reflection assured him that his momentary fear was groundless. Sutherland might talk as he chose ; Caussidière was master of the situation, since with him lay all the authority of the law.

'Monsieur,' he said, 'you are an admirable champion. I congratulate madame

on having secured you. But pray tell her from me that her child remains with her husband, not her lover.'

In a moment Sutherland had caught him by the throat.

'Scoundrel!' he cried.

'Let me go,' hissed Caussidière. 'If you have taken my wife for your mistress you shall not bully *me!*'

But he said no more. Grasping him more firmly by the throat, Sutherland shook him till he could scarcely breathe; then lifting him, he dashed him violently to the ground; then, without waiting to see what he had done, he lifted the frightened child in his arms and hurried from the place.

CHAPTER XLII.

NEMESIS.

By what train of circumstances had the dead Caussidière again become quick, or rather, to express it in correcter terms, how had the Frenchman escaped from the perils and the pains of death?

The answer is simple enough. Among the patriots of the Parisian Commune there were two Caussidières, in no way related to each other, but equally doubtful in their conduct and their antecedents; and it

happened, curiously enough, that our Caussidière's *alter ego* had also been arrested for treasonable practices.

The Paris of those days has been compared to Pandemonium; everything was one wild frenzy of hurried and aimless hate; and the newspaper reports, like the events they chronicled, being chaotic and irresponsible, it happened that the fate of one individual was confused with the fate of the other. At the very moment that one Caussidière was lying dead before the soldiers of the Commune, the other was escaping in disguise towards the Belgian coast, whence, after divers vicissitudes, he sailed for England, to reappear finally in Annandale, like a ghost from the grave, as we have seen.

It would have fared ill with Caussidière

had it not been for the good offices of his old comrade Huet, who, by dint of unlimited swagger and a certain bulldog courage which he in reality possessed, had risen to a position of importance in the councils of the reigning party. If the truth must be told, he would have left the prisoner to his fate, but for a secret dread that Caussidière before dying would make open confession of certain matters which deeply concerned his own safety. So, by dint of intriguing and bribery, he at last contrived that the prisoner should leave his prison and escape from Paris.

Once safe on English soil, Caussidière became himself again. He forgot his abject terror and resumed his old manner. Then before he had been in London many days arose the question—How was he to subsist?

He had little or no money, and such talents as he possessed were not at that time in much demand. A happy thought struck him—he would go down to Scotland, hunt out the rich mistress of Annandale Castle, and perhaps secure some help from her sympathy—or her fear.

Thus it befell that he arrived quietly one day in the town of Dumfries, and within a few hours of his arrival heard that Marjorie was alive and dwelling with her mother at the Castle. Up to that moment he had been in doubt whether the woman he had betrayed was alive or dead—indeed, he had scarcely given her a thought, and cared not what fate had befallen her. But now, it was very different! She lived, and by the law of the land was his lawful wife.

His plans were soon laid. He determined

to see Marjorie alone, and if she was obstinate and unforgiving, to use what power he had over her to the utmost, with the view of securing present and future help. On reflection, he had not much doubt that he would soon regain his old influence over her; for in the old days she had been as wax in his hands, and her character had seemed altogether gentle and unresisting.

He reckoned without his host. These seemingly feeble and too faithful natures, when once they gain the strength of indignation and the courage of despair, assume a force of determination sometimes unknown and foreign to the strongest and most passionate men.

* * * * *

As matters had turned out, however, it was not with Marjorie herself that the

Frenchman had had to reckon, but with her life-long friend and protector, John Sutherland. This pertinacious young hero, whom he had always hated, had now fully asserted his authority by giving him the first sound thrashing he had ever received in his life.

Baffled, bruised, and bleeding, livid with mortified rage, Caussidière remained for some time where Sutherland left him, and when he at last found speech, cursed freely in his own tongue. Then he paced about madly, calling heaven to witness that he would have full and fierce revenge.

'I will kill him,' he cried, gnashing his teeth. 'I will destroy him—I will tear him limb from limb! He has outraged me—he has profaned my person—but he shall pay dearly for it, and so shall she—so shall

they all! I was right—he is her lover; but he shall find that I am the master, and she my slave.'

Presently he cooled a little, and sat down to think.

What should he, what could he, do? Of his power over Marjorie and the child there was no question; by the laws of both England and Scotland he could claim them both. But suppose they continued to set his authority at defiance, what then? They were comparatively rich; he was poor. He knew that in legal strife the richest is generally the conqueror; and, besides, while the war was waging, how was he to subsist?

Then he bethought him of his old hold upon Miss Hetherington, of his knowledge of the secret of Marjorie's birth. It was

useless to him now, for the scandal was common property, and Mother Rumour had cried it from house to house till she was hoarse. The proud lady had faced her shame, and had overcome it; everyone knew her secret now, and many regarded her with sympathy and compassion. For the rest, she set public opinion at defiance, and knowing the worst the world could say or do, breathed more freely than she had done for years.

Thus there was no hope from her; indeed, look which way he might, he saw no means of succour or revenge.

As he sat there, haggard and furious, he looked years older, but his face still preserved a certain comeliness.

Suddenly he sprang up again as if resolved on immediate action. As he did so

he seemed to hear a voice murmuring his name.

'Caussidière!'

He looked towards the window, and saw there, or seemed to see, close pressed against the pane, a bearded human countenance gazing in upon him.

He struggled like a drunken man, glaring back at the face.

Was it reality, or dream? Two wild eyes met his, then vanished, and the face was gone.

If. Caussidière had looked old and worn before, he looked death-like now. Trembling like a leaf, he sank back into the shadow of the room, held his hand upon his heart, like a man who had received a mortal blow.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE END OF A 'GOOD PATRIOT.'

CAUSSIDIÈRE remained in the room for some time, but as the face did not reappear, his courage in a measure returned to him. At last he took up his hat and left the house.

He was still very pale, and glanced uneasily from side to side; he had by this time forgotten all about the child, and Marjorie too. He went through a succession of bye-streets to the police station,

saw the inspector—a grim, bearded Scotchman—and demanded from him police protection.

'Protection! What's your danger?' asked the man politely.

'I am in danger of my life!' said Caussidière.

He was very excited and very nervous, and the peculiarity of his manner struck the man at once.

'Who's threatening ye?' he asked quietly.

The repose of his manner irritated Caussidière, who trembled more and more.

'I tell you I am in mortal peril. I am pursued. I shall be killed if I do not have protection, therefore I demand assistance, do you hear?'

Yes; the man heard, but apparently he did not heed. He already half suspected

that the foreigner before him was a madman, and upon questioning Caussidière a little more he became convinced of it. The only information he could get was that the Frenchman had seen a face looking at him through the window of the inn, and that he believed it to be the face of some enemy. As the information was so meagre, Caussidière was dismissed as having no tangible cause for fear, and no need whatever of police supervision.

After a short but stormy scene with the inspector he walked away, revolving in his mind what he must do to make himself secure.

Of one thing he was certain; he must leave Dumfries, and resign all hopes of obtaining further assistance from Marjorie or her friends. He must remain in hiding

until political events veered round again and he could return to France.

He hurried back to his hotel, and locked himself again in his room. He drew down the blinds and lit the gas, then he turned out all the money he was possessed of, counted it carefully over, and disposed it about his person.

He had enough for his present needs, but as circumstances compelled him to look to the future, he decided that he had too little to allow him to satisfy the claims of his landlady ; he therefore neglected to ring for her before leaving.

His next care was to dispose about his person any little articles which his portmanteau contained ; then he drew from his pocket a small box, fixed on the false beard and moustache which it contained, and

having otherwise disguised himself, stood before the mirror so transfigured that he believed even his dearest friend would not have known him.

By the time all this was done it was getting pretty late in the day, and close on the departure of the train he had decided to take.

He listened; he could hear nothing.

He walked boldly out of the room, and having quietly locked the door and put the key in his pocket, strolled leisurely out of the inn and down the street unrecognised by a soul. He went straight down to the railway station; took a ticket for the north, and entered the train, which was about to start.

He had a carriage to himself; the first thing he did, therefore, was to throw the

key which he had taken from the room-door out of the window ; then he travelled on in comparative peace.

It was somewhat late in the evening and quite dark when he reached his destination —a lonely village not far from Edinburgh. He walked to the nearest and quietest inn, and took a bedroom on the third floor.

That night he slept in peace. He remained in the village for several days, and during that time he kept mostly to his room.

On the night of the fourth day, however, he rang for the maid, who on answering the bell found him in a state of intense excitement.

'Bring me a time-table!' he said ; 'or tell me when there is a train from this place?'

'There is none to-night, sir!'

'None to-night?'

'No, sir, the last train is gone; but the morn's morn——'

'Well?'

'There is one at seeven o'clock to Edinburgh.'

'Then I will go by it—do you hear? At six you will call me, and I leave at seven!'

The girl nodded and retired, fully under the impression, as the inspector of police had been, that the man was mad.

At six o'clock in the morning the maid, with a jug of hot water in her hand, tripped up the stairs and knocked gently at Caussidière's bedroom door.

There was no reply.

She knocked louder and louder, but could

elicit no sound, and the door was locked. Leaving the jug of water on the mat, she retired. In half-an-hour she returned again. The water was cold. She knocked louder and louder, with no result. Thinking now that something might be wrong, she called up her master. After some consultation the door was forced.

All recoiled in horror. There lay Caussidière dead in his bed, with his false beard beside him, and his eyes staring vacantly at the ceiling.

As there were no marks of violence upon him, it was generally believed by those who stood looking upon him that his death had been a natural one. How he met his death was never known. It was discovered long after, however, that he was a member of many Secret Societies, that

he had betrayed in almost every case the trust reposed in him, and was marked in their black list as a 'traitor'—'doomed to die.'

CHAPTER XLIV.

CONCLUSION.

It was not until after Caussidière was laid in his grave that the news of his decease reached Marjorie. She read in a Scottish newspaper a description of the mysterious death of a French gentleman in a village near Edinburgh, and suspicious of the truth she travelled to the place in Sutherland's company. The truth was speedily made clear; for among the loose articles found on the dead man's person were several letters

in Caussidière's handwriting, and an old photograph of herself, taken in Dumfries.

Besides these there was a curious note-book, written in cipher unintelligible to those who had not been initiated, but having reference, doubtless, to the mysterious societies with which the deceased had been connected.

It would be false to say that Marjorie rejoiced at her husband's death; it would be equally false to say that it caused her much abiding pain. She was deeply shocked by his sudden end, that was all. Nevertheless, she could not conceal from herself that his removal meant life and freedom to herself and to the child. While he lived there would have been no peace for her in this world.

He was buried in a peaceful place, a quiet kirkyard not far from the sea; and there,

some little time afterwards, a plain tombstone was erected over his grave, with this inscription:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
LÉON CAUSSIDIÈRE,
Who Died suddenly in this Village,
June 15th, 18—.

'May he rest in peace.'

Marjorie had it placed there, in perfect forgiveness and tenderness of heart.

And now our tale is almost told. The figures that have moved upon our little stage begin slowly to fade away, and the curtain is about to fall. What little more there is to say may be added by way of epilogue in as few words as possible.

In due time, but not till nearly a year had passed, Marjorie married her old lover,

John Sutherland. It was a quiet wedding, and after it was over the pair went away together into the Highlands, where they spent a peaceful honeymoon. During their absence little Léon remained at the Castle with his grandmother, who idolized him as the heir of the Hetheringtons. On their return they found the old lady had taken a new lease of life, and was moving about the house with much of her old strength, and a little of her old temper. But her heart was softened and sweetened once and for ever, and till the day of her death, which took place several years afterwards, she was a happy woman. She sleeps now in the quiet kirkyard, not far from her old friend the minister, close to the foot of whose grave is yet another, where old Solomon, the faithful servant, lies quietly at rest.

Marjorie Annan—or shall we call her Marjorie Sutherland ?—is now a gentle matron, with other children, boys and girls, besides the beloved child borne to her first husband. She hears them crying in the Castle garden, as she walks through the ancestral rooms where her mother dwelt so long in sorrow. She is a rich woman now, for by her mother's will she inherited all the property, which was found to be greater than any one supposed. She is proud of her husband, whom all the world knows now as a charming painter, and whose pictures adorn every year the Scottish Academy walls; she loves her children; and she is beloved by all the people of the pastoral district where she dwells.

The Annan flows along, as it has flowed for centuries past, and as it will flow for

centuries to come. Often Marjorie wanders on its banks, and looking in its peaceful waters, sees the old faces come and go, like spirits in a dream. The gentle river gave her the name she loves best, and by which many old folk call her still—Marjorie Annan; and when her time comes, she hopes to rest not far from the side of Annan Water.

THE END.

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